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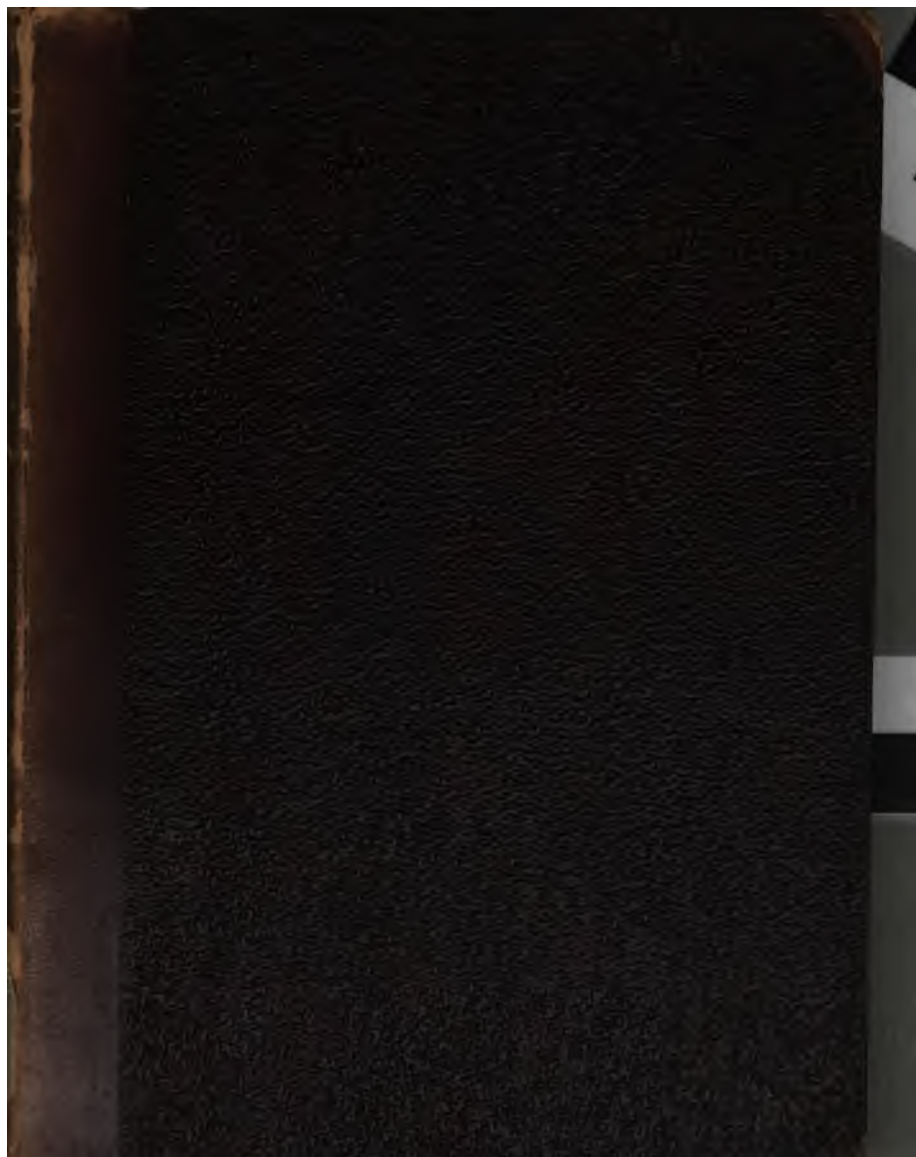
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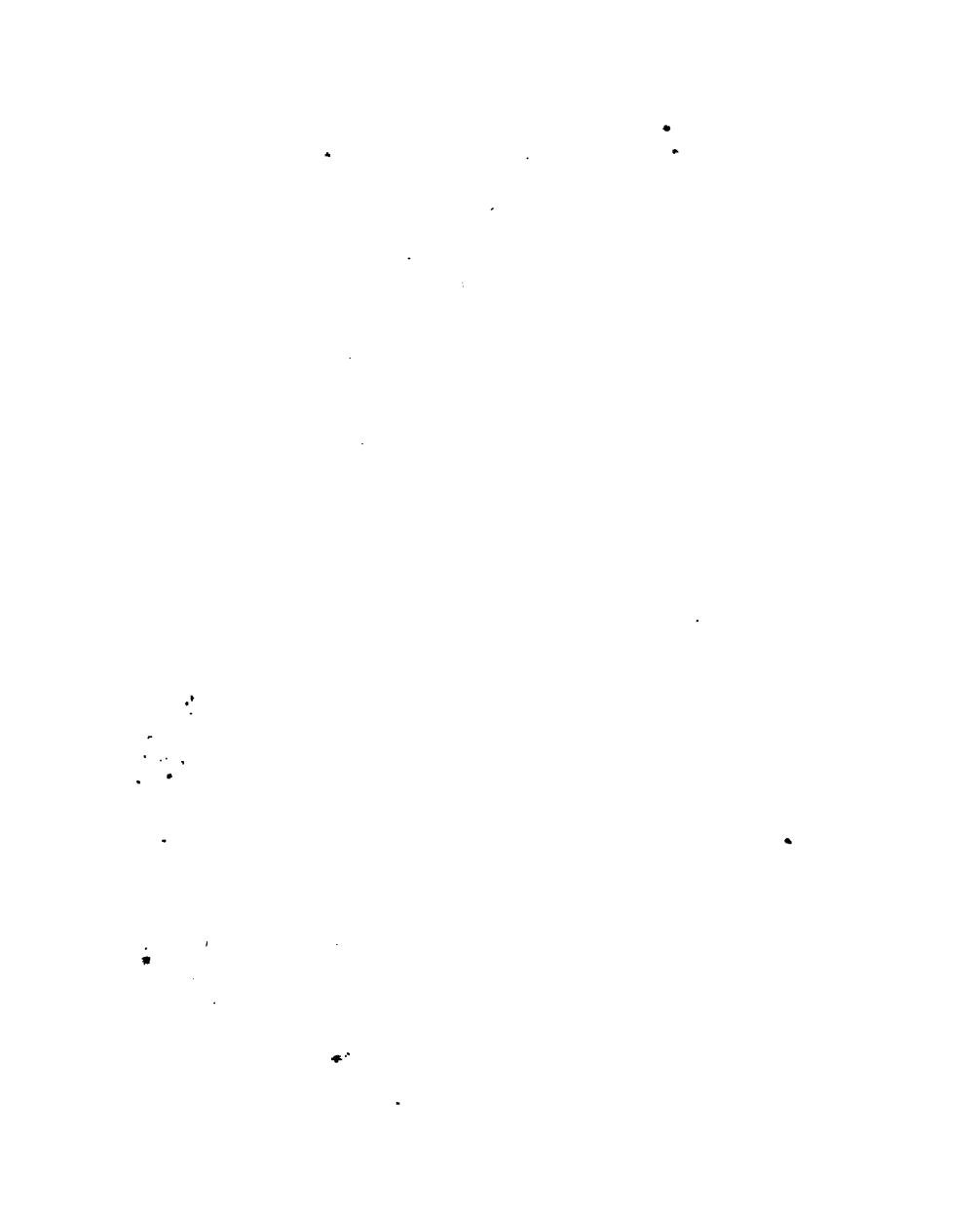
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**COLLECTION**  
**OF**  
**BRITISH AUTHORS.**  
**VOL. CXXIV.**

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**MARMADUKE HERBERT**  
**BY**  
**THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.**  
**IN TWO VOLUMES.**  
**VOL. II.**



# MARMADUKE HERBERT;

OR,

## THE FATAL ERROR.

A NOVEL

FOUNDED ON FACT.

BY

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

**VOL. II.**

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# MARMADUKE HERBERT;

OR,

## THE FATAL ERROR.

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### CHAPTER XXXVI.

"MY blessed child improves in beauty and intelligence every day. Her resemblance to my dear sister is remarkable, and endears her still more to my heart. Strange to say, my husband appears vexed whenever I refer to this resemblance, but so he does when I speak of my lost Frances, who is continually in my thoughts. I dare say that he thinks my regret would wear away, if I less frequently made her the topic of our conversation. Some kind motive, I feel sure, always actuates him, even when he seems displeased.

"I have of late often seen Doctor Bellinden, and consulted him about my husband's health, which gives me increasing uneasiness. The doctor thinks change of air absolutely necessary; but knowing his dislike to such a measure, I suggested that were it recommended on account of my health instead of his, my husband would, I felt sure, be more disposed to adopt it.

"I shall utter no falsehood, my dear Mrs. Herbert," observed the worthy doctor, "when I say that your health requires a change of abode, for you have looked very delicate of late; nursing has weakened you, and a milder climate would be advantageous."

*Marmaduke Herbert. II.*

"My husband entered unexpectedly at that moment, and I felt, and I fear looked like, a criminal detected in some crime. He betrayed evident symptoms of displeasure when the doctor stated that he had been recommending change of air for me. Remarked that he had not been made aware that I was unwell, and, in short, behaved so differently to his usual kind manner towards me, that I fear the doctor went away thinking him harsh and stern, if not indifferent about my health. — I would not for worlds that he should be misjudged, and I was greatly pained that he should appear, what I know he is not — unkind. How continually do I find it necessary to remember past and present kindness, to prevent my giving way to the regret occasioned by the change in my husband's manner, from passionate love to a kindness, meant to atone for its cessation."

"I have had a most painful scene with my husband. Alas! alas! that I should have to record such an event! I endeavoured to explain away his annoyance about my detected consultation with Dr. Bellinden. Why was I so unthinking as to use the word nervous, when referring to his case? It offended him, and increased his displeasure. I must never again employ that unlucky word. Would that I could divine what is agreeable, and the reverse to him, in order to avoid ever giving him pain. I never before saw him really angry; and to know that my inadvertence aroused his displeasure, has pained me to the heart. Persons of such deep sensibility as he possesses, should be treated with the utmost forbearance and delicacy; and I, who would rather die than displease him, have proved myself greatly deficient in the last. I made a desperate effort to recover my self-control and courage, and happily succeeded in persuading him to follow Dr. Bellinden's advice. We are to leave Llandover in two days, for Devonshire. Heaven grant the change of air and scene may be productive of good to him! I believe there was *some* truth in the good doctor's opinion, — that my health also

required change of place. I feel a sense of fatigue and oppression very often; but my thoughts have been so wholly occupied by those dear to me, that I have not had time to think of self.

“Since I have discovered that his happiness does not depend on me, I feel less anxious to live. To sleep beside my mother and sister in their quiet grave, until awoke by the last trumpet, no longer alarms me, as it would have done, when I believed he would be wretched without me. Alas! have I not learned the bitter truth, that he is wretched with me, notwithstanding my fond, devoted affection; and after this, what charm can life offer? But no, — I must not thus abandon myself to despair. My child; my dear, blessed child, requires my care; and I must not forget the duties a mother has to fulfil. How disposed is the human heart to selfishness? — when disappointed in its cherished hopes, it leads one to wish for death. I must check this proneness to discontent — I must fix my thoughts on the solemn obligations into which I have entered — and, instead of thinking of my happiness, endeavour, with all my mind, and all my strength, to secure that of my husband and child. If I cannot be the object of his passionate love, as I once was, let me at least, be his tender nurse, — his kind companion, whose society he would miss, if deprived of it — and I will not murmur — will not long for that calm slumber in the tomb, with those who so fondly loved me.

“To-morrow we depart. I stole out alone to visit the spot where my mother and sister are laid, and to drop my tears on the stone beneath which they repose. I could not leave them without many a heart-felt pang; and were I disposed to be superstitious, I should own that a secret presentiment seemed to forebode to me, that I beheld that spot for the last time. But am I not in the hands of ‘my Father, who art in heaven;’ and in this trust, why should I fear? *He* knows what is best for me; and to *His* will do I bow.”

"It is now many weeks since I opened my little journal. I sometimes ask myself why I commenced? and why should I continue it? The want of some one to whom I could *say* what I write, first led me to note down thoughts and events; for I soon discovered, that even to the beloved of one's heart, one cannot always open its secret recesses. I think, too, that the habit of noting down one's thoughts may be useful in enabling us to correct our failings. How often have I detected my own selfishness, when I read some of the passages to which it had given rise, and endeavoured, not always I trust unsuccessfully, to correct it. Selfishness is the bane of happiness, for it leads us to think only of our own disappointed hopes, when we should be exerting ourselves to console those of others. On the ruins of selfishness should the foundation of pity be erected.

"Our journey here was through a country presenting the most beautiful scenery at every turn. My husband enjoyed it, and every mile that marked our distance from Llandover seemed to remove a weight of sadness from his breast. — How glad I am that I won his consent to our leaving home. Already his health seems improved. He eats with a better appetite, and I, seeing this happy change, feel as if the principle of life were renewed in my frame. His tenderness, too, has returned; and happiness once more smiles on us. Grant, oh Almighty! a continuance of these blessings.

"Won into confidence by a belief in the restored tenderness of my husband, and my feelings softened by this belief, I took courage to pour out the long suppressed emotions that filled my heart. I ventured to tell him all that was passing in my heart, how, even in the midst of happiness the memory of those dear departed ones, would glide in to make me sigh that they were not partakers of my felicity — Alas! I met no sympathy! Why do I *pine* for it? and by revealing my thoughts, draw down on myself *some remark, so like a stern reproof*, that my frightened heart

shrinks in alarm before him who uttered it. — Perhaps I am unreasonable in expecting sympathy. Men do not feel as women do, I am convinced; and probably my husband is not different from the rest of his sex in this particular, and consequently is not to be blamed. But his nerves are so excitable, that I fancied he could understand mine.

“While on our journey, a proof of this excitability was given me; for, on my reading in the newspaper, the details of a detected murder, committed by a man, previously believed to be a worthy individual, and greatly beloved by his family, my husband was seized with a violent spasmodic attack, that terribly alarmed me. It is most painful to behold him at such moments; and for hours after, I cannot recover the shock, though I affect to make light of it to him. That night, he uttered the most incoherent ravings, trembled, — and at length, gave such evidence of mental, as well as bodily suffering, that in pity I awoke him from his perturbed sleep. For some minutes, his agitation was so great, that he did not recognize me. He questioned me in visible inquietude, whether I had heard his ravings; — said he had had a frightful night-mare, during which, a person with eyes of fire seemed bent on destroying him.

“The least shock of the nerves brings on these fearful attacks the following night — attacks, which prove a highly sensitive nature — such a one, as I might look to for sympathy. Would to heaven, that I could vanquish this growing discontent! It is wrong, — it is sinful; and often, perhaps, originates in my inexperience and want of knowledge of mankind. How many women, far superior to me, may have more cause for complaint — Complaint! No; I will efface the word, for it is one that should never be used towards a person we love.

“This is a charming place: the verdure so luxuriant, — the foliage so umbrageous, — and the productions of nature so rich and various. The sea, too, oh! how sublime and ever beauti-

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ful it is! What thoughts of immensity — of eternity — does it awaken — I feel as if I should never be tired of gazing on it, and of listening to the murmur of its waves. I am glad we came here. He, too, seems to like it. Oh! may every breeze bring healing on its wings to him.

“We have got a pleasant house, and I have been making it look more like a home, with flowers and books scattered around. He smiles at my attempts at housewifery, and expresses himself pleased with my arrangements; but the smiles are but faint and sickly ones, and he frequently falls into his old fits of silence and abstraction, quite forgetful that I am near him. Sometimes it occurs to me that he must have some secret cause of chagrin, which preys on his heart, and destroys his health, and then I become so wretched, that I long to throw myself on his neck, and entreat him to let me share his pain, whatever it may be.

“Is it not one of the privileges of a wife to partake the troubles of a husband, as well as the joys? and why should I forego it? I torture my brain with vague and painful imaginings of the probable or possible cause of his chagrin, until I become so alarmed at the wild images my anxiety have conjured up, that I rub my eyes like one awakened from some frightful dream. My very soul melts with tenderness for him when I behold the gloomy reveries into which he falls. — I could weep over him as a fond mother weeps over her only child when danger menaces it; and with this love and pity in my heart, I must hide its overflowings, lest I annoy, instead of soothing, or comforting him.

“When, as often happens, he catches my eyes anxiously bent on his face, he looks angry, and even reproachful, I frame some phrase to address him, to explain my anxiety, my deep sympathy, but the sternness of his glance causes the words to expire on my tongue, and it is with difficulty I can check the tears that rush to my eyes. What misery can surpass that of seeing the object of our most tender affection, him whom we would die to save from

chagrin, betraying a wretchedness, the cause of which we cannot divine, and the effect of which we are not permitted to soothe?

"A mystery seems to impend over him. He writes to no one; receives no letters: or if he does, they are never referred to. He never mentions the name of any friend, or even acquaintance, or makes allusion to his school or college life. He is yet so young, that of the busy world he can have seen but little. How then account for his deep melancholy, his abstraction, and reserve? But hold! Have I a right to question, to pry into his past days? Am I not rather enacting the part of a mere suspicious acquaintance than of the tenderest, truest friend? If he withholds his confidence, is it right, is it delicate in me to form a single conjecture as to the cause of his troubles? And yet, Heaven knows, no idle curiosity urges me on to desire to become acquainted with aught he may wish to conceal. It is his evident unhappiness that creates the wish to know the cause, and the longing desire to mitigate the effect.

"I have become a very early riser, and walk out, accompanied by my child and her nurse, along the shore. The dear little creature opens her bright blue eyes to gaze on the sea, when the sun makes it look like a vast sea of molten gold. How interesting it is to mark every token of awakening intelligence in one's child! Mine — but perhaps the partiality of a mother influences my judgment — appears to me to be peculiarly intelligent for her age.

"For some days, in my early walks, I have noticed a very beautiful woman, accompanied, like me, by her child and its nurse. — We looked at each other every time we met, as if attracted by a mutual sympathy. This morning the fair stranger stopped when we encountered each other, and asked permission to kiss my little one. She lavished commendations on its beauty; and by that sure and short road to a mother's heart, made a very favourable impression on mine. I could do no less than embrace



her child, a dear, nice little girl, but certainly much less pretty than mine; and in ten minutes we were the best friends in the world, walking side by side, and chatting as familiarly as if we had been acquainted for years. — We parted, promising to meet next day. My new friend would have our little girls to kiss each other; and a pretty sight it was when their nurses approached their dear little faces, both the fat, dimpled little creatures, smiling and cooing as they were brought lip to lip. The two mothers shook hands cordially, and then we separated; neither knowing or having inquired the name of the other, or, I venture to say, having even dreamt of it.

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## CHAPTER XXXVII.

"My new friend improves greatly on acquaintance, although at our first interview I thought her so agreeable as not to need any additional charm. She is beautiful, without the slightest semblance of vanity, or affectation, and full of vivacity, so tempered by womanly gentleness, that it exhilarates the spirits without ever incurring the risk of bordering on levity. Her husband is away, and this is their first separation. She speaks of him with an emotion that proves how fondly he is beloved, and refers to him continually. He will soon join her here. I know so little of my own sex, having associated only with my husband's mother, my own dear parent, and my ever lamented sister, that I cannot judge comparatively of women, but if all are like those I have named: and this new friend, then must they be indeed entitled to be termed the good, as well as the fair sex. How all these dear ones to whom I have referred would have liked my new friend. — Again I have forgotten to inquire *her* name, and she has not asked mine.

"There is an indescribable charm in a friend of one's own sex and age, and especially in one who loves her husband and child as I do mine. Such a ready sympathy springs up spontaneously between women similarly situated. They can say all that they think to each other, without fearing a cold remark, or being misunderstood. They can prattle of their husbands, their children, their gardens, and a thousand things, which men care not to hear. Already I have told my friend of the grief I have experienced in the loss of my dear sister and mother, and her eyes *filled with tears, as she held out her hand, and said, 'Let me be*

a sister to you, I never had a sister, and have always longed for one. Now you are the very person I should like to be my sister, for already I feel drawn towards you, more than to any woman I ever knew. A sort of magnetic influence attracts me to you. Do not reject my affection, for I never offered the gift before.'

"This frankness and *naïveté* won me. I reached out my hand to meet hers, and then she playfully insisted that our little girls should enter into the same pact of friendship, both of us smiling as we placed their plump, dimpled hands together.

"My husband seems to look somewhat coldly on my new friendship. I proposed to him to invite the object of it to come and spend the evening with us; but he received the proposition so formally, not to say discouragingly, that I abandoned the project. He said he disliked female friendships, and above all, with persons who were strangers; but added, that if his society were so irksome to me, that I required that of another, he would yield his own objections, and I might write the proposed invitation. I, of course, would not accept this sacrifice; and he rather sternly cautioned me against forming acquaintances with persons whose characters, nay, whose very names I was ignorant of, and whose exteriors, however captivating, might conceal the worst qualities. All this may be true, and I admitted his superior wisdom; but as far as regards my new friend, I feel as convinced that she is all goodness, as I do that I live and breathe. Is there not something in the heart that prompts us to put faith in some, strangers though they may be, while a secret instinct warns us against others?

"I did not take my usual walk this morning, although the sacrifice of giving up meeting my new friend really gave me pain. My husband betrayed a dissatisfaction at our meeting, that decided me on staying at home, for I would infinitely rather forego any pleasure, than act contrary to his wishes.

"What will she think of my absence after the friendship to


which we pledged ourselves only yesterday? I like her so much, that it grieves me to think we may meet no more, or that she should imagine that I am insensible to the affection she has professed for me. But any thing is better than offending my husband, or adding to his low spirits by an opposition to his wishes.

“He has evinced great kindness. Has told me he wishes me to resume my matinal walks; and so, to-morrow, I hope to meet my interesting and charming friend. His wish for me to resume my morning walks, I consider as a tacit sanction to meet my friend.

“I am so glad! While conversing with my husband yesterday, our servant entered, and announced that a lady wished to see me, and ere he had finished the sentence, my friend was in the room, looking so bright and joyous, that the effect produced on me was as if a sunbeam had shone in to cheer and warm me,

“‘I called to inquire if you are well?’ said she, ‘for I was really rendered uneasy by your absence from our favourite promenade. I would have sent, but I did not know your name,’ and she laughed like a pleased child. ‘How delightful, how romantic,’ resumed she, ‘to have formed a friendship, that I feel will endure without knowing each other’s names!’

“I presented my husband to her, and even his dear, serious face relaxed, from its usual grave character, as he looked at her smiling and beautiful countenance, and listened to the clear and sprightly tones of her sweet voice. I marked with pleasure that he quite partook of my admiration for my friend, and her lively sallies, and total freedom from affectation, had a most beneficial effect on his spirits. She is one of the most fascinating creatures imaginable, and no one can resist her winning manners, and artless graces. *Now my dear husband can comprehend how I was attracted towards her at once, and will no more accuse me of imprudence in having formed a friendship for a stranger. — She has offered to come and pass the evening with us, to which*



we have joyfully assented, and we then parted the best friends in the world."

"She spent last evening here, and her society lent wings to time. Never had I seen my husband so cheerful before. She drew him out into conversation with perfect ease, excited him into vivacity, nay, even occasionally bantered him, but in such a feminine, playful, yet gentle manner, as to induce him to throw off his reserve. Would to God I possessed her gaiety and talent for conversation, for then I might beguile the long evenings, which hang so heavily on my husband. I never so thoroughly felt my own inferiority to him until I saw how she could amuse and interest him, drawing out the stores of information which he possesses, and which have been hitherto as a sealed book, which I, alas! have no key to open. And yet this sense of my own inferiority begets no envy, no jealousy in my breast. It only makes me wish that I was more capable of interesting and amusing him, and could chase away the moodiness that I now begin to think must originate in *ennui*.—I do hope that the society of this charming woman will bring comfort to me, and cheerfulness to my husband, and that her husband will prove as great an acquisition to mine as she is to me. A man requires the society of his own sex to keep up the tone of his mind, and I am sure the husband of my friend must be precisely the sort of man I should like to have as a friend for mine. All that I have seen of her leads to this conclusion. She could not love him so fondly as she does, were he not of a very superior character to the generality of men, so quick-sighted, well-informed, and highly gifted as she is."

"Another day has gone by, the greater part of which my dear friend has been here, both during the day and evening. Her society acts as an exhilarating cordial on the spirits of my husband, and like genial sunshine on mine. I am amused, as well as surprised to see how frankly and gaily she chides my husband whenever he for a moment relaxes into moodiness, while I who have

now been so long his wife, would tremble even to chide or banter him on the subject. But then I am so different, so timid, and so fearful of inflicting pain on him. I begin to think that the more we love, the less can we exhilarate the spirits of those dear to us.

“With my charming friend, I find all the vivacity of my girlish days returning. I can enter into her lively sallies, nay, hazard some in turn when we are alone; but I know not how it is, I have grown so timid from the fear of displeasing my husband, that in his presence I have not courage to venture to be amusing. Perhaps, were he to throw off his gloom, I might acquire courage, but a curve of his brow, or a pshaw, would freeze me into silence in a moment. I count on the happy influence of my friend’s vivacity over him, and that which a contact with her husband may produce. She tells me that he always acquires a great influence over the men he likes. How I hope he will like Marmaduke.”

“I have been, and am, greatly moved by something strange and unaccountable that has occurred. My friend was passing last evening with us, when a note was brought her. She had been talking with delight of the expected return of her husband in a day or two, and forming various plans for excursions to be undertaken *en partie quarrée*, to every place worthy of attention in this neighbourhood, and of a long visit which she insisted we must pay her at their seat in the country. — She tore the note open hastily, her eyes sparkling with pleasure; but no sooner had she perused a few lines, than, blushing deeply, she arose to depart, saying, that her husband had returned, and required her presence at home. — She declared she would scold him severely for not *coming* for her, instead of sending, if, in the joy of seeing him she could find nerve to scold.

“‘I really must check this commencement of insubordination,’ said she, or something to that effect, ‘lest my husband should become a tyrant, like yours; read this note;’ continued

she, throwing it on the table, and, embracing me, she hurried away.

"I took up the note, which Marmaduke wished to see. It stated, that though impatient to behold her, he could not, for reasons he would explain when they met, go for her to Mr. Herbert's, as she wished him to do. 'You see,' continued the note, 'that although you don't know it, I am already acquainted with the name of your new friends, which I learned from one of our servants, when I inquired where you were.'

"No sooner had my husband seen the signature, 'George Neville,' than he repeated it aloud, adding, 'How strange!' and betraying symptoms of great agitation. I ventured to observe, that it appeared as if the discovery of our name had been the cause of Mr. Neville's not coming; but this remark offended Mr. Herbert, who turned from me in anger. Why is it that I so frequently give offence, or pain, when nothing is so far from my thoughts as to do so? It had occurred to me that he might have formerly known this Mr. George Neville; that they might have quarrelled, and did not wish to meet; but it appears my supposition was erroneous.

"When I asked my husband's opinion on the matter, he looked angry, and said the subject was not worth thinking about; but he greatly pained me when he added some severe reflections on the giddiness and unguardedness of Mrs. Neville, in making acquaintance with strangers, which he said might have offended her husband, and to reprove her, he had declined coming to our house for her.

"I confess these reasons were unsatisfactory to me, and the strictures on my charming friend, while yet her kind words were ringing in my ear, and her parting embrace fresh in my memory. I could not resist vindicating Mrs. Neville, or at least sharing the blame, if blame was to be found, for our having so unceremoniously formed our friendship; but my attempt to exonerate her

from censure was not only wholly unsuccessful, but greatly displeased Mr. Herbert.

"I have been nervous and anxious all the morning expecting to see or hear from my friend. No tidings have reached me of her, though the hour when she used to come has long gone by. — But this delay may have originated in her being so much occupied by her husband after his long absence. I can easily fancy that were mine just returned, after a separation of some weeks, I should be disposed to postpone my visit to the dearest of friends. Mr. Neville, too, may be a ceremonious man, and desirous not to come here until later in the day. In short, many circumstances may have kept them away. My husband proposed my walking out with him; but I declined, because I was afraid of missing my friend when she comes.

"I know not how to account for the dislike my husband has conceived against Mr. Neville; but that he has conceived it, is quite clear to me, for when I repeated some of the commendations bestowed on him by his wife, they were received with a sneer, and a certain air of incredulity that pained me. He also commented with severity on the loquacity of my friend, and, in short, plainly betrayed that he had imbibed a strong prejudice against both husband and wife.

"The day has passed away, but brought neither visit, nor letter from Mrs. Neville! How strange! I could settle to nothing, so anxious was I to see or hear from her, in consequence of the mysterious note of her husband last night, and I found myself involuntarily going to the window every ten minutes, to watch for her coming, until, having discovered that my anxiety had been noticed, and was offensive to Marmaduke, I constrained myself to my chair, and took up some needlework as an occupation. What can have prevented her coming, or writing to me?



"I have at last heard from Mrs. Neville, but her letter affords no clue to the mystery of her husband's strange note of last night, although it confirms my fears that he wished to avoid meeting us. What can be the motive of this avoidance? I am lost in conjecture. And every imaginable motive for conduct so unaccountable pains and distresses me.

"Mr. and Mrs. Neville departed for London early this morning! Her letter was a farewell, written in a constrained, but nevertheless, an affectionate tone. It contained no reference to any future meeting! And this then is the end of a friendship, from which I promised myself so much happiness, and hoped the low spirits of my husband would derive relief. Mrs. Neville had repeatedly told me that her husband would remain some weeks here. That his letters stated this intention, and yet he remains but one night. She made me promise, too, that we should go on a visit to them, and now does not even revert to the subject! Can it be possible, that Mr. Neville has some cause for avoiding an interview with Marmaduke? Yes, it must be so. My husband knows something to his disadvantage, and Mr. Neville shrinks from confronting him. This explains the depreciating tone adopted by Marmaduke, when I repeated Mrs. Neville's commendations of her husband, although he would not reveal the cause. That any cause could exist for Marmaduke wishing to avoid *him* is out of the question. Poor dear Mrs. Neville, how it grieves me that the husband she so fondly loves could ever have done aught to make him avoid mine! It must be a terrible humiliation to a woman, to know that him she *loves* has reason to shrink from confronting any human being; and she is one to feel this so keenly, that I pray she may never suspect it. How generous, how noble it was of Marmaduke to find plausible excuses for the sudden departure of the Nevilles, *rather than betray*, even to me, what he knows! And I, could *accuse him of severity*, and incredulity with regard to Mr. Ne-

ville's high qualities, while he was generously concealing his evil ones. — Good, dear Marmaduke!"

"It is strange how often I find my thoughts reverting to my sweet friend Mrs. Neville, though, seeing that the subject is a disagreeable one to my husband, I avoid it. There is something peculiarly annoying in having any prohibited topic with a person dear to one, for it invariably presents itself more frequently to the lips than any other; and one is compelled to be continually on one's guard, lest it should escape them. I feel sure that I never should have continued this Diary, could I have conversed unreservedly with Marmaduke! This little book is the safety valve for thoughts that must not be uttered to him!"

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"A LONG time has elapsed since I last opened this little book. Much anxiety and grief have fallen to my share, but much good also has been accorded me by the Almighty. Perhaps the trials I have endured were mercifully sent to arouse me from the stupor of discontent, into which I was falling, for, since the mysteriously sudden departure of my friend Mrs. Neville, my spirits have given way, and forgetful of the blessing I still enjoyed, I ungratefully pined for the loss of one I had anticipated. We had decided on leaving this, when two days previously to the one named for our departure, my darling child was taken dangerously ill, and for many days I trembled for her life. Oh! the agony of those days, when watching every change in that dear face, I felt that, were my child snatched from me, I could not support existence. How puerile then appeared all the annoyances I had lately undergone! What was then to me the loss of Mrs. Neville's friendship? or the motive which led to it? Had I not my child — my husband? Oh! yes, I merited chastisement for such weakness, such wilfulness. I merited the terror that for days and nights tortured my soul, but I merited not the mercy shown me in the escape of my child from death, and, in the restoration of my husband's tenderness.

"How unceasing was his care, how terrible his anxiety during this trial. Should aught ever again occur to vex me, let me remember all his goodness and tenderness during my darling's illness, and every other annoyance will be forgotten.

"I, too, have been very ill, so ill, that I feel it will be *long ere I regain my strength*, — I had felt indisposed for some *time prior to my child's dangerous malady*, and the anxiety I

underwent proved too much for me. I can hardly regret what I suffered when I daily beheld the tender assiduity of my beloved Marmaduke to both his invalids. — Oh! the blessing of marking how inexpressibly dear and precious we are to his heart! Of seeing how wholly self is forgotten in his care of us! Our child has grown so fond of him, that she would fain never have him out of her sight, and he, dear, good soul, submits to her *exigence*, not merely with patience, but with pleasure. I have forced him out to have a little air, and note down these few lines while he is absent and my darling sleeps.

“The alarm excited by our illness has awakened the slumbering tenderness of my husband. It beams in his eyes, which are continually turned to us, it betrays itself in every word he utters, and in every intonation of his voice. The state of languor and debility to which I am reduced is not without its charm to me. To lie on the sofa, almost helplessly, wholly dependent on him, and nursed with a tenderness, not to be described, is indeed most soothing. If I fall into a doze, his dear face watching over me is the last object I behold; and when I awake, there is the same glance of affection to greet me! It is sweet to live thus cared for, and even death would be robbed of his terrors when love stands by to soothe the dying to the last.”

“A long chasm in my Journal, but only mercies and good to be noted down. The roses of health have returned to the cheeks of our child, and my strength seems restored. Happiness is the best of all medicine, as I have experienced; for I believe, under heaven, it has cured me. But I must not undervalue medicine, either, for to Doctor Western’s skill in the treatment of my child, what do we not owe. — He has pronounced that we may both now travel, and thinks that change of air will be beneficial to us; so, it is arranged that we are to depart in two or three days.

*“I shall never forget the attention of Doctor Western and his*

wife and daughter, who have been daily visitors during my illness, and have dropped in many evenings to cheer us with their society. They are amiable and worthy persons, and I greatly esteem them.

“We have received such a pressing invitation to pass this evening with the kind Westerns, that we have consented to go. They are to have a few friends; and although I feel little inclination to meet strangers, they made such a point of our spending the evening, that, without appearing ungrateful, I could not decline going. I must conquer this growing dislike to society, for I think going into it may prevent my dear husband relaxing into low spirits again; and what would I not do to guard against the possibility of this.

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“Would I had not gone to Doctor Western’s party last night: nothing but mortification awaited me there! I am pained, hurt, and humiliated. — A presentiment of evil warned me not to go. Had I obeyed it, how much annoyance would I have been spared! So happy, too, as I have lately been in my husband’s restored tenderness, and my re-established confidence in it. Now my mind is all confused; my confidence shaken; my self-respect humiliated. That he ever could have loved, or even fancied he loved, the coarse, the vulgar woman, we met there, seems so impossible, that if I had not heard her assert it in his presence, I should have wholly disbelieved the statement. Oh! how mortifying it is to discover that the only man ever loved — the husband of one’s choice — could have ever dreamt of selecting for a wife a woman, from whom any man possessing delicacy, or a sense of propriety, must shrink in disgust. — I feel the blush of shame mount to my very brow, when I think of this Mrs. Mordaunt — so unfeminine, so full of levity, and so bold! *And I, so proud of his preference, so certain that I had been the first, the sole object of his affection! Nothing lowers a man*

so much in the estimation of a right-minded woman, as to know that he has soiled his heart, and given such proof of want of refinement of mind, as to have loved such a woman as I saw last night. I dared not meet his eye, lest he should read the disgust with which her presence inspired me, and consequently discover how changed must be my opinion of him. And now is revealed the cause of Mr. Neville's sudden departure, and the breaking off of his wife's friendship for me. Oh! what would I not give, that I had never heard the things told me by that coarse woman, Mrs. Mordaunt! or, having heard, that I could forget them. — To have the man whose name I bear — to whom I looked up with such respect — disliked, avoided, — despised. My whole being seems changed: I am by turns angry, indignant, and scorched by a sense of burning shame! That cruel woman insinuated, too, that he was suspected of being crazy, as she termed it. Oh, my God! what am I to think?

“This last terrible stroke almost deprives me of reason, while giving rise to the most fearful suspicions. I bless God for being, through *his* mercy, enabled to conceal the awful shock I had received. Stunned — tortured — as I was, I would not, for worlds, have let my unhappy husband know by word or look, what was passing in my mind. I feared several times that I should have fainted, so overpowered was I; but, even in that trying hour, I prayed for help, where alone help can be found, — and it was accorded to me. Pity — the most profound and tender pity — filled my breast for my poor husband. I could have wept over him, as a fond, and forgiving mother weeps over a child, who had been her pride, but who is no longer so; yet, who though shunned by all else; will never be deserted or reproached by her.

“Oh! my unhappy Marmaduke! — Now is revealed the fatal cause of all thy nervousness! — thy sleepless nights, — thy *incoherent ravings*, — thy deep despondency and moodiness!

But I have sworn to hold to thee in sickness, as in health; in sorrow as in joy; and faithfully will I fulfil my vow. Never shall a word or look lead thee to suspect, that I know that which would bring the blush of shame to thy brow, — a sense of humiliation to thy heart. Henceforth, I will be thy solace in all thy trials, if thou wilt let me, though all others keep far aloof.

“Oh! wondrous power of love, that acquires strength even from misery! — that can cling to its object through every trial — even that most bitter one — shame for his errors. And has he not need of all my pity, all my love, now that I can no longer bestow on him my esteem, and that he has lost that of the world? Why did he not trust me with the truth? Why permit me to hear evil of him from another? Heaven knows, he might have confided in me! Whatever may have been his sins, when I united my destiny with his, I did it in no light spirit; but firmly and solemnly determined to share all of evil, as well as of good, that awaited him. Should the whole world forsake him, am I not the more called on to supply, as far as I can, the loss of that society and countenance, which a sensitive mind like his must feel so severely. Yes! marriage is a holy — a blessed institution — and, even in this heavy hour of trial I feel it to be so, when it gives me the privilege of sharing his trials — his sorrows — even though I may not have the power of mitigating them. He little knows the deep sympathy they have excited in my breast, while he imagines that I am ignorant of them.

“Perhaps his reserve — his concealment — has originated, *not* in a want of confidence in me, but in dread of giving me pain. I catch at excuses for his conduct, as a drowning wretch catches at straws. Alas! such is the poignant anguish which even the bare notion of his unworthiness inflicts, that I would resign life itself to be able to absolve him from guilt — no, I will not, cannot *write the word guilt*, as applied to him; I will, in spite of all *that I have heard*, all that I may hear, maintain that he can have

only committed some error, and that he knows not guilt. Could I love him as I do, were he guilty of crime? I, who even shudder at the sound of the word! — But I must not probe my heart too much on this point, lest I find my sense of morality give way, and acknowledge, in the words of Moore's song that once made a strong impression on me: —

'I know not, I ask not, if guilt 's in that heart,  
I but know that I love thee whatever thou art.'

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"I have been treated with an indignity that, in spite of my firm resolution not to allow myself to give way to the sense of mortification such treatment must inflict on any person with sensitive feelings, has deeply wounded me. How long will it be ere I get accustomed to meet with insult, — ere my feelings become hardened to bear it?

"Who could have expected that worthy individuals like Mrs. and Miss Western could have so acted as to wound my feelings so deeply? Instead of the cordial greeting we had been accustomed to receive from them, the most marked coldness and constraint, without any attempt to conceal that our visit was unacceptable to them, were so visible to us that we remained but a few minutes at their house, where we had gone to bid them farewell. I felt my husband's arm tremble as mine leant on it when leaving the house. I dare not trust myself to look in his face from the dread of increasing the painful emotion under which I felt assured he was suffering, and I uttered not a word on the subject, which I was sure occupied his thoughts as well as my own.

"My poor Marmaduke! And is it come to this? Did I induce you to leave our secluded home, where at least insult could not meet us, to expose you to it here? Though scorched by the blush of shame, Heaven is my witness, that I forgot my own wounded feelings to think only of his. Why will he not confide



to me the cause of the treatment we have experienced, and thus give me the opportunity of pouring the balm of affection and sympathy on his wounds? Never will I refer either to past affronts, or notice future ones, by word, look, or deed: his home shall never be disturbed by his being reminded of the annoyances met with abroad, but I will endeavour to keep him away from meeting those who might renew painful recollections.

“I have discovered that my husband demanded an explanation of Doctor Western of the cause of the treatment to which we were subjected at his house, and the doctor having told him that it was owing to some slanderous statements made by Mrs. Mordaunt to his wife and daughter during his absence from home, Marmaduke wrote to demand satisfaction of Mr. Mordaunt. Oh! my God, what fatal consequences might there not have occurred, had Mr. Mordaunt accepted the challenge. How fearful to think of this senseless, this unchristian mode of proceeding, tolerated by society! An unworthy man, (Mr. Mordaunt, I am persuaded, is one,) injures, or his wife injures, a worthy one. The injured demands satisfaction, and runs the risk of killing, or being killed by the man who has wronged him. And this is deemed satisfaction for an injury! It is not enough then that a man's feelings may be wounded, but he must expose his life to the chance of a pistol-shot, or his conscience to the terrible chance of shedding human blood — of sending a fellow-creature out of the world! — Why should not a code of true honour be instituted, by which a man whose conduct was ungentlemanly, should incur the punishment of being excluded from society, without being allowed the right to challenge any of those on whom he wished to avenge his angry feelings. Why not have courts of honour, as well as of law to try culprits accused of having violated the established regulations of its codes?

*“How much self-reproach have I merited for accusing my*

husband of not seeking an explanation of the insults offered to us (not a hostile one) while he was busy in demanding satisfaction. When I reflect that he might now be a murderer; or, oh! terrible alternative — be no longer among the living — my blood runs cold, and I feel I can never be sufficiently grateful to Providence for his safety — I discovered the whole affair not from my dear husband, but from Doctor Western, who came here to make the most humble apologies for his wife and daughter, and who showed us the letter of apology from Mr. Mordaunt. I also got from the Doctor the letter of Mr. Mordaunt to my husband, which, I believe, Marmaduke did not wish me to see. Oh the baseness of this pair. The husband meanly giving up his wife to obloquy, as a slanderous gossip, everlastingly bringing him into scrapes, and he trying by submission to escape the consequences her folly and wickedness entailed on him. — I felt such contempt for both, that I regretted Marmaduke had condescended to notice their slander, nevertheless, his manliness in calling the husband to account, proves he did not dread meeting any charge against him.”

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## CHAPTER XXXIX.

"My husband has left the choice of where we are to go, to me. But to me all places are alike — I dread solitude for him, his spirits being depressed by it, and perhaps in a crowded city we may best escape coming in immediate contact with those *he* may wish to avoid, or who may wish to avoid him. I tremble at the bare notion of his encountering any one, formerly known to him, whose coldness might provoke him into a duel, now that I am aware he has not the same objection and horror of the system of duelling that I entertain. My poor Marmaduke! how I pity him, and how I love him!

"We arrived in London, yesterday. What a vast world of a place it is! The crowds, the noise, stunned and alarmed me, and a sense of isolation stole over me, that made me draw closer to my husband's side. Not so our child: she laughed, and clapped her little hands as she gazed on the passing throng, while we drove through the streets to the hotel, where we are to remain until we have procured a house. I know not whether it is the fatigue of the journey, or the confined and less pure air of the town that has disagreed with me, but I feel so weak, and have such a pain in my side and chest, that I cannot make the slightest exertion without a sudden faintness coming over me. I must conceal this from Marmaduke, for he is so easily alarmed about my health."

"I have seen such a woman; but no, let me not call her woman, for she much more resembles a man. She is the aunt *of that disagreeable* Mrs. Mordaunt, who occasioned me so much *pain at Torquay*. My husband knew her at Oxford, and by

chance we encountered her in this hotel, where she has been staying, and she would, *bongré, malgré*, force herself on us. — Through this masculine creature I discovered that Marmaduke really had intended marrying Mrs. Mordaunt, for the aunt said he had a happy escape from her. I wish that I had never known that he could have thought of so coarse and vulgar a person as a wife! Mrs. Scuddamore, — so is the aunt named, — inspires me with as much dread as an old rough soldier could do: so *brusque*, so unfeeling, and continually talking of military affairs. Perhaps, had I been in good health and spirits, I might have smiled at this strange creature's sayings and doings, but, ill and nervous as I feel, she alarmed and disgusted me. I hope I may never again meet her, and so I am sure does Marmaduke. How she had harassed my feelings, and his, by dwelling on the sad, sad death of my dear sister, even after she was told how nearly we were related. I forget every pang Marmaduke has ever inflicted on me when I see how acutely he still feels that terrible event. It is such a proof of his tenderness of heart and affection. Ah! never can I forget how he behaved when, on our wedding-day, he went off to perform the painful duty to the dead. How unselfish, how kind was his conduct all through! Oh! let me always have the consolation of reflecting, that whatever may have been the errors of his youth before I became known to him, from that hour his conduct has been irreproachable! Is not this something? Ah! how much to be thankful for!

“We moved into our new abode yesterday, and I hope its quiet, after the bustle and noise of a crowded hotel, will do me good. My husband is all kindness and attention, his spirits, though not high, they never were, are more even, and free from moodiness, and our dear child is a constant source of interest and pleasure to him, as she is to me. The owner of this house too, appears to be an excellent woman, and has busied herself to *make our rooms as comfortable as possible*.

"I wonder whether I shall ever get accustomed to the crowded streets, and constant din of London!

"The pain in my chest and side increases rather than diminishes, and I can scarcely force myself to eat, my appetite has become so bad. I have often heard that London produces bad effects on those accustomed to the pure air of the wild mountains of Wales, but I had no idea the influence could be so powerful.

"I have accompanied Marmaduke to the public galleries, and to the studios of the most esteemed artists, and have been delighted with some of the pictures and statues I have seen. A new source of pleasure has been opened to me, and I feel a love of art developing itself rapidly in my mind as I behold its *chef-d'œuvres*. I am surprised when I discover that an instinctive feeling leads me to prefer only the best works. So uncultivated as my taste has been by never having contemplated the works of good masters, or indeed any masters at all until now, it seems strange that this instinctive taste should at once declare itself. I feel it with satisfaction, for the pleasure it conveys takes my thought from painful reflections, and furnishes agreeable topics of conversation for the evenings. Marmaduke delights in fine pictures and statues, I should be greatly disappointed if he did not share this taste with me. Every innocent pleasure that diverts attention from painful thoughts, is a boon from the giver of all good, as the wild and beautiful flowers that spring from the hedge-rows that border a road on which we are travelling, beguile us from a sense of its weariness. Methinks that were I a constant dweller in London, I should be a frequent visitor to the public galleries, as a relaxation to my mind, and an anodyne to soothe or make me forget pain.

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"I get no better, — nay more, I fear that the pain in my side and chest increases. The sense of fatigue certainly does, for I am conscious of it, even in the midst of the enjoyments so lately

opened to me. Perhaps the excitement they occasion may be the cause, for I, ignorant as I am, experience an enthusiasm as I contemplate these productions of master minds, of which I did not believe myself capable. I could not define the beauties in them that fascinate me, nor reason on them, but I feel, acutely feel, the admiration they create.

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“Yes, a crowded capital, with the ever moving scene of busy life it presents, is the best place for those who have thoughts from which they would fain escape, or who are isolated in the world. The constant demands on attention, the novelty of the objects that attract it, and the various reflections they excite, occupy the mind, and fill up the hours. My dear Marmaduke, I can perceive, derives the same advantages from our sojourn here that I do, which makes me rejoice that we came hither.

“Nothing has occurred since our arrival to give us pain, except the encounter with Mrs. Scuddamore; and even that had its good side, for the heartiness and cordiality of her manner towards Marmaduke proved that she could know nothing to his disadvantage at Oxford; for, with a woman with her stern notions of honour, she would not have evinced such warmth and goodwill, had there been the slightest accusation, or even suspicion of aught injurious to his reputation. How often has this consolatory reflection come back to me since I saw her, inducing me to overlook all that displeased me in her.

“Still tormented by the pain in my chest, and increasing debility, which renders every exertion fatiguing, I carefully conceal both from my dear husband, for he is so much more cheerful than he used to be, that I cannot bear to disturb his serenity by any alarm about me, and I well know the least hint of my being ill would make him anxious and unhappy.


“I have been to the Opera, and one or two of the other theatres. The music of the first surprised, and delighted me; —

it was a new, an engrossing pleasure. It soothed, it entranced me, and drew from my eyes the sweetest, softest tears that ever visited them. What a potent spell does fine music exercise over a sensitive person! Every note seemed to find a vibration in my heart, until, hurried away from the actual present, into another, a brighter world, I forgot every care, every sorrow I had ever experienced, and was alive only to a sweet, a delicious melancholy, such as is sometimes awakened by an air heard in happier times, and in other scenes. And yet the music was all new to me! I suppose it was the weak state of my nerves that led to this powerful effect on them. Into what unknown realms of thought does music lead us; and how weak seems language compared with it! To me there is something mysterious, and religious in it, something that lifts the soul to its Creator. Such at least was its effect on me, for although in no sacred fane, but in a theatre dedicated to pleasure, and crowded by gay faces, a solemn, a holy feeling stole over me as I listened to the music of "Moïse," and turned away from the stage which disturbed my associations, to resign myself wholly to the magic of Harmony. No; music, I feel, could never be a light pleasure to me! I only stayed a short time during the ballet. It displeased, it annoyed me, to see women exhibiting their persons with such a reckless oblivion of the modesty inherent in our sex. Through what a long process of mental demoralization must these poor creatures have passed, before they arrived at this state of indelicacy! And yet loud were the plaudits, reiterated, the clapping of hands, that marked the admiration these feats of dexterity excited; — and this before so many women presumed to be irreproachable. It appeared to me that this frantic applause of indecency was an affront to all my sex. It seemed to convey the insulting thoughts of the applauders, that women, designed for such holy purposes, — to be the sweeteners of home, the tender wives, the devoted mothers, *the dutiful daughters*, — should thus profane their sacred call-

ing, for the amusement of the idle hours of sybarites. And yet, women looked on, unabashed, unwounded; — nay, shared of the admiration of the male sex as was demonstrated by their smiling faces, their tapping the fronts of their boxes with their splendid fans, some of them even applying their white gloved hands to the palms, in imitation of the men! I turned from the sight, grieved to have witnessed it, and will never again see a ballet. When will women comprehend and fulfil their mission?

“While I believed my illness was concealed from my dear husband, he was anxiously noticing every symptom that indicated it, and this morning used all his persuasions to induce me to see a physician. I have promised, that if I do not derive benefit from the daily excursions into the environs which he proposes, I will yield to his wishes, but I trust that fresh air will restore my strength. His tenderness, his attention melts my heart. He accuses me of not thinking enough of my health. Well may I forget illness when his dear and watchful love guards me! Oh, the happiness of knowing, and feeling, that one is so unutterably dear to another!

“We have been making the most delightful excursions into the country. How beautiful are the environs of London! Reclining on cushions in a boat, with my husband and child close to me, and gliding over the smooth and transparent bosom of the Thames, a blue sky over our heads, and just enough of sunshine to warm us, I feel that I could for ever pass my days in a sort of dreamy existence, without the fatigue of motion. We have been repeatedly to Richmond, beautiful Richmond, and to Marlow, passing by the stately woods of Cliefden. — How varied, how enchanting the scenery, and how delightful to contemplate it with those we love! Health ought to come with the soft and balmy breezes that fan my brow, and play with my hair, yet it *has not made me feel sensible of its approach. Perhaps it is only*





a blessing deferred! But am I not in the hands of *Him*, who best knows what good is for his children?

"Never since my marriage have I felt so happy, so blest as of late. The tenderness of my dear Marmaduke, the growing beauty and health of our dear child, and an indescribable, but sweet calmness of spirit that has come over me, makes me often wonder how I could have been so wretched at Torquay — how I could ever have for a single moment believed, nay even suspected that my husband could have erred — could have merited reproach or avoidance. I blush to have judged by appearances. Heaven be thanked, I never revealed to him that I did so, or I could never meet his glance.

"I suppose I caught cold on the water, for lately I have been annoyed by a cough, which is very troublesome, and at night especially. This new ailment has awakened afresh the alarm of my dear husband, and he insisted on calling in Doctor Harford.

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"The doctor has been here, and has divined every one of my symptoms. The pain in my chest and side, and the frequent attacks of fever. Dear Marmaduke looked as pale, and anxious, while the Doctor was questioning me, as if my malady was of the most serious character, nor could my assertions of the reverse quiet his anxiety.

"Dr. Harford has recommended me to be taken to a warmer climate, with as little delay as possible, and said it was also necessary for my dear husband. He named Nice, to which place we are to proceed in three or four days. This advice makes me fear that my disease is of a more serious nature than I imagined, and yet I do not feel ill, that is, not so ill as to make me apprehend danger. Dear Marmaduke is evidently alarmed, although he endeavours to conceal it from me. He little knows that I am *so well acquainted with every change in his expressive countenance, that I can read it as easily as an open book.*

"I strongly suspect that his saying that the Doctor thinks change of climate necessary for him as well as for me, is a mere pretence, urged lest I should object to going on the continent on my own account solely, while he knows I would go any where that could do *him* good.

"I have had another bad night. My cough was much more troublesome than hitherto, and to-day I feel feverish and uncomfortable. My God, can it be, that I am to be taken from my husband—my child? Now, too, when I am so happy, so desirous to live! A pang of agony shoots through my heart, as I contemplate the possibility of parting from those to whom it clings with a love stronger than life. My husband—my child! Oh! spare me, Almighty, to those whose happiness is bound up in me. I am yet young; let me still stay with them, if but for a few years longer. But if this must not be; if thy fiat has gone forth, grant me, oh! in mercy, resignation to submit to *Thy* will, and vouchsafe unto my husband courage to support the impending blow. My tears fall so fast, they blot the words I write, and blind me. I must hasten to remove the traces from my eyes lest he should return, and suspect the cause.

"Death is now ever before me; it haunts my pillow; it fills me with terror and anguish every hour! And can it be that I must soon go hence, and be no more seen? Be hidden from the light of day, behold no more the bright sun, the fair earth, and all it yields of sweet and beautiful? I who love Nature as a child loves its mother, whose heart thrills with pleasure when I behold her charms! But all these blessings I could resign without a murmur, could I but remain with those I dote on, in the most dreary clime that ever chilled the human heart. In the wilds of Siberia would I make my home, could I but be left with my husband and child. And will this heart that now throbs with affection, this brain filled with agonizing thoughts at the bare notion of being torn from those so dear, soon be but as the clod

of the valley, insensible to all, even to the wild grief of him who will so deeply mourn my loss? Is there no medicine, no skill, that can prolong my life? I will close this journal, nor lose a single one of the few hours that may remain to me, in noting down the agony of this too fond heart. Pardon me, Oh! my God, for this impious impatience, and want of submission to *Thy* will. Grant me fortitude to bear what *Thou* thinkest best for thy suffering servant, and grant resignation to my dear husband, to whom this weak heart clings with too great a love, to bear parting, when I am summoned hence.

“To-morrow we depart for Nice. My poor dear husband still indulges hope of my recovery, but my increasing want of strength warns me that it is delusive. I must, by degrees, prepare him for our separation, that he may be better enabled to meet the blow.”

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## CHAPTER XL.

THE effect produced on my feelings by the perusal of this artless disclosure of the sentiments of my lost wife, may be more easily imagined than described. It seemed, if that could be possible, to increase the love I had borne to her, and to aggravate ten-fold the sorrow her death had occasioned me. Every pang I had ever caused her rose up to reproach me; and as I felt the soul-harrowing conviction that I had embittered her life, nay, more terrible still, abridged it by the anxiety to which I had given rise, I wept in agony, and loathed myself.

I could not lay down the Journal until I had perused every line. I refused sustenance, and remained locked up in the chamber until I had concluded the Diary—at one moment melted to tenderness by the avowals of her affection, and the next almost maddened by the overwhelming sense of my own unworthiness. And while she had been writing many of these pages, I, selfish and incapable of duly appreciating the treasure I had lost, was accusing her of being a spy on me, attributing the watchfulness of anxious love to curiosity, or a more unworthy motive. And *she* who so loved me with all my faults, whom my moodiness and wayward temper grieved, but never disgusted, she was in her early grave, sent there through the cares and uneasiness I had entailed on her gentle heart! What tears, although every one sprang from a source opened by torture, and flowed like molten lava, scorching the eyes whence they fell, could atone for my sins to her, who had been the angel guide vouchsafed to me by the Almighty?

*No longer was my grief torpid, as immediately after my return*

to consciousness from the brain fever it had been. Despair had now taken possession of my soul. Fate, I deemed, had done its worst, and hopeless for the present, I was reckless for the future.


I had destroyed the most peerless creature that man had ever been blessed with; and now, *now* when it was too late to make atonement, to throw myself at her feet, to bathe them with my tears, to confess my unworthiness, and avow my adoration, I discovered my injustice, and the pain it had inflicted. — My child, too, how had I wronged her, by depriving her of such a mother — one who would have trained her so admirably in the path of rectitude; one who would have presented her so bright an example of every virtue! Again and again, I perused the Journal. I slept with it under my pillow when in bed, and referred to its artless pages often during the night and morning. Never did the most passionate lover read the first letter accorded him by the object of his idolatry, with the same engrossing interest that I perused this Diary; and although it inflicted torture, I would not have resigned it for all the world could grant.

I had not yet ventured out of doors, although my physician was anxious I should try the efficacy of air and exercise to restore my shattered health. His reiterated request on this subject at length induced me to go out to drive, and having ordered the coachman to proceed in the direction recommended by the doctor, I no sooner got out of the sight of the latter, than I desired the man to conduct me to the English Cemetery. To that spot my heart had yearned to go ever since I was capable of bearing the exertion. I left the carriage at some distance from the gate, and, with trembling steps, entered the sacred resting-place of the dead. I soon discovered the spot; white marble monuments had been erected over the graves of my adored wife and my lamented *friend*, by Mrs. Neville, and as I perused the name and age of *my lost Louisa* I felt like a culprit, as conscience whispered that

I it was who had consigned her, while yet so young, to a premature grave.

How strange, how terrible, are the feelings experienced on beholding, for the first time, the spot that holds the mortal remains of one who was our all of life, our sunshine, our blessing! The conviction of our desolation seems never to have struck us so wholly, so overwhelmingly, as now. I sank on the cold earth beside the marble, and bathed it with burning tears; I called on the dead, as if she who had ever answered me with words of love could now hear me; and, forgetful of how unfit I was to die, I prayed for death, to be reunited to her. The sun shone out, and its beams played on the white marble, but I turned from its cheering influence, heart-stricken by the thought, that although it might warm the marble, it could not warm the precious deposit it contained. The birds chirruped gaily as they flew from tomb to tomb; but, for the first time of my life, their notes wounded my ear. Why should there be sunshine, and notes of joy, when all my sunshine, all my joy, was interred beneath the marble beside me? It seemed unnatural—cruel—and aggravated my sense of misery. I would fain have had the bright luminary of day veil its face in clouds, nature itself put on its gloomiest aspect, the birds forget to sing, and all around become shrouded in darkness, like that which filled my soul.

And must I go hence, and leave her in a foreign grave, her whom in life I could not bear to quit for even a day? And now days, weeks, months, and years may roll on, ere I am summoned to take my everlasting rest beside her! determined that the first step I would take should be to add a codicil to my will, desiring that wherever I might chance to die, my mortal remains should be conveyed to this spot, to be interred by those of my adored wife. How eagerly does the despairing wretch catch at anything, however puerile, that holds out the slightest prospect of even a momentary relief to his woe! The thought of assuring



the certainty of being buried in the spot on which I then reclined, seemed to bring the hope of death nearer, and in some sort to console me, though, notwithstanding this hope, I found it difficult to tear myself from the grave of my wife, even when the deepening shades of evening warned me to begone; and I should hardly have found resolution to go, had I not heard the coachman, alarmed at my long absence, entering the cemetery to come in search of me! I could not bear that he should profane the spot by his presence, nor witness my grief; so I turned away with a breaking heart, and, entering the carriage, was driven to my desolate home.

A cheerful fire blazed on the hearth, commanded by my thoughtful physican, lest I should be chilled on going out for the first time after so many weeks' confinement to the house. It gave an air of comfort to the room; and the light from it fell brightly on the ornaments and furniture around. I thought of the deepening gloom of the cemetery, of the cold grave in which my loved one was sleeping; and, giving way to a passionate burst of tears, I rushed into the dark chamber inside, and, flinging myself on my bed, remained there for the night.

And now my doctor became urgent with me to leave Nice. He declared that change of air and scene were absolutely necessary; and that if I did not, without delay, remove, a low nervous fever, which was hanging about me, would certainly grow into a chronic ailment, most direful in its effects. I questioned him, whether such a malady was likely to occasion death. But he shook his head, as if divining the motive of the question, and answered, "No, not death, but a state of suffering to which death would be infinitely preferable — a state bordering on insanity."

My own sensations warned me that this might be, for there *were moments, nay hours, in which my grief was so overwhelming, that I felt that reason tottered on her throne, and led to a*

growing desire to abridge by my own hand, a life that was become insupportable to me. I therefore determined to leave Nice, and my arrangements were just completed, my farewell visit, an agonising one, paid to the cemetery, when the evening previous to my departure, I received the following letter, in an unknown hand. The signature, however, soon revealed the writer, and as I glanced at it, an instinctive presentiment of evil and danger flashed through my brain.

“Sir,” wrote this vile wretch, — “when I sat up with you during your illness, you let out in your sleep a secret, that you would rather die, I am persuaded, than have known to the world. That secret is in my keeping, and it depends on you, whether or not it will remain so. You will easily guess to what I allude, but in case your memory should fail, I will at once go to the point. You, for reasons best known to yourself, but which may easily be surmised, threw your sister-in-law down a precipice, by which she was killed, and you buried her in a cavern. So convinced was I that what you were raving about every night must have some foundation in truth, that when I was dismissed by your doctor, I availed myself of the information I picked up from one of your servants, about where your home was, and set off, regardless of expense and trouble, to Wales, being well convinced my long journey would prove a profitable one. Arrived at Llandover, I went to your house, made acquaintance with your housekeeper, by representing myself as having lived in your service, informed her of the death of your wife; and, after a few days’ close inquiry as to whether any young lady had ever fallen down a precipice, I discovered that your sister-in-law had *accidentally*, as was believed, met her death in this way, and that it occurred a short time before you were married. It instantly occurred to me, *that had her death been purely accidental, why should you, and so long*



after the matter, too, be continually raving of it, and accusing yourself of having thrown her over the cliff? I will not tell you *all* the discoveries I made. Let it be sufficient to state, that I have found the body, that I have concealed it where you can never discover it, and that if you do not buy my secrecy, I will disclose the whole fact, and have the body brought forward, in proof of my assertion. Five hundred pounds will buy my silence, and you shall hear of me no more; but refuse these moderate terms, and I will at once have you arrested as a murderer, and brought to condign punishment. I know you intend leaving Nice to-morrow morning; but go where you will, I will pursue you, and carry my threat into execution.

"I remain yours to command,

"JAMES FIGGINS.

"P. S. I will call for an answer."

Amazed, confounded, terrified, my senses were overwhelmed by this unexpected blow! I reeled under it, my brain grew dizzy, and reason denied its aid to guide me through the fearful danger that threatened to destroy me. Whichever way I looked, danger beset my path. Exposure, ignominy, and a scaffold, arose in terrific array before me, and no mode of escape, save suicide, presented itself to my agonized brain. I rushed to my chamber, locked the door, tore off my neckcloth, bared my throat, and seized a razor, when, at the moment I opened it, with desperate intent to inflict a deadly wound, the voice of my child crying out, "Papa, papa! mamma is come back!" arrested my hand. I cast the instrument of destruction from me, hastily resumed my neckcloth, opened the door, and found my child in her night-clothes, trembling with cold, outside it. Half frantic, I caught her up in my arms, and wildly pressed her to my heart. "Papa!" said she, "mamma came from heaven to my bedside, *and kissed me, when I was asleep, and I awoke, and got out*

of bed, and ran to tell you, for I knew you would be so glad."

I dropped into a chair, still clasping my child, that little creature, who had been, through the interposition of the Almighty, my preserver from the terrible sin of suicide — from a felon's grave.

The alarmed nurse now entered. She had left my child sleeping, while she descended for a night light. The dear creature had dreamt that her blessed mother was returned, and, mistaking the dream for reality, had ran to tell me the happy tidings, and thus, by little short of a miracle, had my life been spared. The dear child could not be persuaded that she had not seen her mother. She persisted in asserting it, and maintained that she was sure that dear Mamma was still behind the curtain of her little bed.

This intervention of Providence made a deep and lasting impression on my mind. When my child was removed from my chamber, I sank on my knees, and humbly implored pardon for the terrible sin I had dared to meditate, and offered up prayers that never more might I be tempted to such evil thoughts. My mind was all in a tumult! The reflection that my poor child might now have been an orphan, had not her dream led her to my door, made me tremble, while I owned the goodness of God in having vouchsafed this mercy.

But what was to be done with the wretch who was waiting for my answer to his diabolical letter — to the serpent who had entangled me in his folds? Stunned by the terrible emotions of the last hour, acting on a frame exhausted by mental and bodily suffering, and with a brain maddened by conflicting feelings, a release from the terror inspired by the vile man who menaced me seemed the object in life the most desirable at that tremendous crisis — I had lost the power of reasoning. I could not *see the possibility of proving my innocence of actual guilt against*

his nefarious charge, and in a moment of madness, I sent him a cheque for the sum demanded — and thus sealed my doom, by admitting the truth of his assertion. — I placed myself in the power of a fiend, whence never more could I extricate myself, and the sum paid to secure his secrecy, would furnish the terrible proof of supposed guilt. — Yet that night I slept more calmly than for many a previous one. Thus have human beings been known to dance over a volcano ready to explode and destroy them.

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## CHAPTER XLI.

I AWOKE the next morning in a very different frame of mind. The folly, the madness of having yielded to the threats of the villain Figgins now struck me so forcibly, that I could hardly comprehend how I could have perpetrated it.

A night's calm and refreshing slumber, the first enjoyed for a long time, had produced such a salutary effect on my nerves, that the menaces which had the previous night almost irritated me to insanity, by filling me with terror, were now looked on in quite another point of view. — Such is the weakness of man, and so do his actions depend on the state of his nervous system!

Now, when it was too late, I could see, and intensely feel, the terrible false step I had taken, and writhe in agony when reflecting on the consequences it would inevitably entail. I loathed my own moral pusillanimity, which, instead of leading me to resist the demand made on me by a scoundrel, whose menaces I should have, in common policy, defied, induced me to comply with it, and by so doing, placed me for ever in his power. — Yes, now, indeed, had I signed my own condemnation — henceforth must I feel myself the slave of a villain. Why had it not occurred to me when I got the demand, to send off at once for the doctor, and tell him of it? He was a sensible, as well as a kind man, much esteemed by the civil authorities at Nice; and had I appealed to him, there was little doubt that he would have extricated me from the clutches of the wretch who meant to make me the prey to his mercenary scheme of extortion.

The artful plot would have been nipt in the bud. The representations of the villain Figgins would have been received as a



vile calumny, hatched to work on the fears of a nervous invalid; and my courage in exposing it, would not only have had the best effect as a proof of my innocence of the charge, but would also have defeated any future scheme of him who sought to extort money from me.

How well, how clearly could I *now* see all this, although the previous night I could perceive nothing but ruin, urging me on to suicide, in order to escape exposure! Oh! God, how could it have been that my reason was so wholly prostrated, that fear, base, ignoble fear, should thus have conquered me! It *now* was evident to me that the threats of Figgins were founded on no more stable basis than that created by his own suspicions. My ravings had excited these; he journeyed to Wales to discover some cause for them — had found that my sister-in-law had been supposed to fall down a precipice, and having thus ascertained that a *part* of my expressions uttered in sleep, bore reference to that sad event, he concluded that those relative to interring the dead in a cavern, must also bear reference to a fact, and thus built up his accusation on surmise. It was clear that had he pushed his inquiries further, he would have learned that the young lady was buried, (as was generally believed) in the vault of my family; and, consequently, would not have searched for the body in the cavern. But working on my fears, he had made the experiment of asserting that he had found the body, an assertion which I now felt firmly persuaded, was utterly false, but which my insanity in crediting, would confirm him in his suspicions. Oh! the agony of reflecting on all this, and despising myself while I did so. Now was I well aware that had I defied Figgins and sought protection from the law, from the knavery he was practising against me, I must have perfectly succeeded in crushing his attempt at extortion; and as I examined, and closely *sifted every circumstance* connected with that fatal event, which *had so darkly coloured my fate*, I felt assured that nothing to

criminate me could have been brought forward. It could have been proved that I had never beheld the young lady, of whose death I was accused of having been guilty. My worthy house-keeper, and other servants could have borne evidence that I had not left my chamber that night until summoned from my bed, where indisposition retained me, by the servant of Mrs. Maitland; I had joined him in search of the missing young lady, at the risk of my life. Even had the body buried in the cavern been exhumed, and identified as that of Miss Maitland, how could it be proved that I had interred it there? Nothing but my incoherent *ravings* uttered when under the influence of delirium, occasioned by a brain fever, could be produced to connect me with the circumstance, and even this could only be adduced against me by Figgins, whose unsupported testimony would have no weight.

How strange and incomprehensible did it now appear, that never previously did this same mode of examination occur, or if it did, never did it produce the same satisfactory effect on my reason. A film that had hitherto obscured my sight, and prevented my beholding all the circumstances of the case in their true colours, seemed to drop from my eyes. Good God! had I for years been blind! Had I borne hours, days, weeks, months, of torture, and only now learned to reason calmly, sensibly, on facts? Could it have been proved, even had the body in the cavern been brought to light, that when I had seen, and caused the other corse to be interred in my family vault, I could have known that it was *not* that of the person missing whom I had never seen; and ever if I had, would not the state of decomposition in which it was, have prevented the possibility of recognition? Had not the clothes of the dead been buried before my arrival, and had I not brought the nurse with me to identify the body? Yes, I was secure, perfectly secure, from the danger menaced by the vile Figgins, had I not, from moral cowardice, placed *myself in the snare he had planned to entrap me.*

I groaned in agony, as the truth now appeared before me, divested of all the terrors with which formerly my alarmed fancy and shattered nerves had clothed it, but which at present reason proved to me I, and I alone, had rendered dangerous by yielding to the menaces of Figgins. And I had embittered the life of my adored Louisa, ay, had shortened it; by the moodiness, the misery I could not hide from her, when by the exercise of my reason I might have seen that I had nothing to dread from discovery, and when I knew myself to be perfectly innocent of any intention to injure her, whose death I had unfortunately caused.

But the same lucidness of intellect which enabled me now to see that all the terrors which had assailed me during so long a period, rendering existence almost a burthen, had been groundless, displayed, oh! how vividly, the danger I had brought on myself by buying the silence of Figgins — I felt that henceforth I must unresistingly submit to his extortions.

To brave him hereafter, armed as he was, with this proof of my conscious guilt, would be impossible; and, as I gloomily looked forward to a prolonged existence, over which this villain could hold a power, which like the sword, suspended by a hair over the head of Damocles, might at any moment fall on me. I longed for death; — what was I to do? — where was I to escape from my tormentor? Had I even paid the five hundred pounds he had extorted from me, in money, direct from my hand to his, no proof could be brought forward of the fact, except his assertion, which I could deny; but no! — as if to affix the seal to my own ruin, I had given the wretch a cheque on my banker, at Nice, whose books could always serve as evidence on this point. And how explain the having given a man, who had been for only a short time employed as a servant in my family, so large a sum of money? What credible motive could I assign? Never did a *barrister*, engaged to defend a client, whose case was desperate, *examine with a cooler, a more searching eye the evidence to be*

produced against him, than I now did my own case; becoming every moment more firmly convinced, that *I* had furnished the only evidence that could injure, and that must one day, sooner or later, destroy me.

Could it be borne that I was to hold immunity from the consequences of implied guilt, only by continuing to pay the heavy price exacted for it, by the wretch who held me in thrall? Would not the facility with which I had yielded to his extortion, induce him to levy it again, and again, until he had wrung from me the fortune of my child, and left me a beggar? — The thought of destroying this man, here crossed my mind; and I, who had in all my misery, found consolation in reflecting, that whatever I might suffer, I was innocent of intentional guilt, now contemplated murder; nay, was ready to commit it, could I but find a safe opportunity. But how was this to be found?

Ay, there was the point; and I conned over every possible chance in which my personal security might not be endangered by the crime I meditated. Could I not seek a secret interview in some retired spot with my enemy, and, armed with a pistol, shoot him through the head? Then came the recollection that I had no pistol, nor indeed any weapon of destruction, and to go out and buy one might excite suspicion, for probably every place where guns or pistols could be bought would be examined, after a man had been shot, in order to discover to whom any had been sold. This project must, therefore, be abandoned for the present at least; and who knows, whispered Hope, but that death, a natural death, involving me in no guilt, may release me from him. He, no more than others, bears no charmed life. One of the same casualties may end his days that so frequently abridge those of other men. Let me, therefore, not despair, at least not until he renews his demands; and let me seek some distant spot, where he may lose the clue to discover my abode.

*What a fearful abyss is the heart of man! even that of one not*



naturally prone to evil! No sooner is his personal safety involved in danger, than he, who would under other circumstances shrink with instinctive horror from committing crime, begins to contemplate it without disgust or dismay. — And I, who would not injure aught that had life, who would recoil with pity from witnessing human suffering, could now meditate depriving a fellow-creature of life, and ardently desire an opportunity of accomplishing this sinful project.

Let no man hereafter say, “this or that crime would *I not* perpetrate.” Or, if such confidence in one’s own integrity may ever be indulged, it can only appertain to him who has been brought up in the love and fear of God, who is prepared to bear every trial with which it may please Providence to afflict him, rather than forfeit the blessing, the inestimable blessing, of a quiet conscience, and the trust that he is walking in the path in which he should tread. Many are those who have passed through life unconscious of their own weakness, and who, because they have not been tempted, believe they would not have fallen. Let such, with humility, return thanks to the Almighty, that they have not been tried, and learn to pity their less fortunate brethren.

The more I reflected on my culpable weakness, the more did I begin to doubt my own sanity. This doubt was my sole refuge from a growing self-contempt that was corroding my mind; for it was less mortifying to believe that my intellects must have been impaired, than to think myself the moral coward which my conduct towards Figgins would imply.

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## CHAPTER XLII.

I LEFT Nice next morning, after taking leave of my good doctor, in answer to whose inquiries of where I intended to direct my course, I stated that it was my intention to proceed to the north of Italy, where I should probably remain a considerable time. To countenance this misrepresentation, made solely with a view to mislead Figgins, I proceeded to Turin, whence, I meant to journey to Naples, hoping that I might sojourn there some time, free from the dread of being followed by my evil genius, for such did I now consider this wretch to be. How did I miss my adored Louisa when I again took possession of the carriage she had been wont to occupy with me.

Every contrivance that had been arranged in it for her comfort, brought a pang to my heart, and as I gazed on the front glasses that used to reflect her beautiful face, I almost expected again to behold it. — My own pale and care-worn countenance alone met my view, and my sable habiliments increased its death-like pallor. My child and her nurse occupied one of the front seats; my lost wife's maid had returned to England with Mrs. Neville. Often would my little girl draw me from a gloomy reverie by calling "papa, and mamma," and the nurse would shake her head, and hold up her hand in reproof, but I ordered that she should not be checked in speaking of her mother, and the dear child, pleased with this freedom from the constraint imposed on her, kept continually uttering the word "mamma," generally adding to it, "mamma is gone to Heaven."

My grief had been rudely broken in upon by the terror occasioned by the wretch Figgins. That so solemn, so sacred a

*Marmaduke Herbert. 11.*

sentiment should be crossed by the ignoble one of fear, and of fear too of such a low villain, maddened me. I hated him with an intensity which no words could express; but alas! I equally feared him, for I was but too well aware that by my own wild terror I had placed my fate in his vile hands. To find myself in some retired spot, where I could, free from interruption, abandon myself to the regret that was now consuming me, appeared to be the natural aim of my tortured heart! While I could conjure up by memory the image of my departed wife, could recall her sweet voice, her beautiful smile, and her fond words, I seemed still to retain something of her, something that pacified, that consoled. I tasted "the luxury of woe," the sole enjoyment left to the heart-stricken mourner. But when this indulgence was denied, when a terror, for feeling which, I despised, I loathed myself, took possession of me, profaning the shrine where only the sainted image of my Louisa should be, I became hopeless, miserable — lost in gloomy abstraction, from which not even the voice of my child could sometimes draw me, I was insensible to all around; I noticed not the scenery through which I passed, I cared not whither I went. Morose, and silent, sunshine or gloom, alike failed to attract my notice.

A return of indisposition detained me several days at Turin, and my servant alarmed, sent off for a physician. This gentleman, luckily for me, was an intelligent, as well as a humane, man. He soon perceived that my disease was more of the mind than of the body; and having learnt from my servant the heavy affliction I had lately sustained, applied himself to soothe and calm my irritated nerves, endeavouring, by every means in his power, to divert my thoughts from self, and the chagrin that was preying on me.

Dr. Martelli possessed extensive information, with a facility of imparting it seldom granted. He was at once a Christian and a philosopher, and the charity prompted by the influence of the

tenets of the first, was ably supported by the philanthropy and wisdom which he had acquired in the school of the second. — He excited my interest, directed it to scientific subjects requiring a more than ordinary attention, led me on to examine theories and systems to which I had never previously turned my thoughts, made me consult the best books on the subjects, sent me from his own well-stored library, and so judiciously treated me, that ere I had been more than a fortnight under his care I felt better. He used to come and spend the evenings with me, revealing the treasures of his noble mind, and keeping my poor one so occupied, as to leave me unconscious of the flight of time.

I could not, before I had experienced the advantage, have believed that it was possible such a salutary effect could be produced on me by any human being; but now I was ready to admit, that if God, for His own wise purposes, permits such wretches as Figgins to cross our path in life, *He* who gave the bane, bestows the antidote in such men as Dr. Martelli! What an expansive mind was his! How full of pity for mankind, and how desirous to ameliorate its condition! With great sensibility, reason so well regulated its impulses, that he was never its dupe. — He analyzed his own feelings as closely and correctly as he would the causes and effects of the maladies he was called in to relieve; and this habit and power of self-analysis enabled him to administer consolation to the minds of those entrusted to his care while applying remedies to the body.

Had I not feared to remain so near Nice, I would have continued my abode at Turin; but the communication between the two places was too direct, and too frequent, to permit me to feel comfortable while within the reach of Figgins, so I proceeded on my route to Naples, leaving my new friend, for such he had in truth become, with unfeigned regret.

My mind had in some degree recovered its tone, although a *deep melancholy* still pervaded it. Mine was not a grief to be

soon vanquished, but it had become more calm, more reflective. It formed a part of myself; I wished not to lose it, for I should have considered it nothing less than a sin of ingratitude to cease to mourn for my lost Louisa. My child, too, now began to be an object of interest and pleasure to me, and the more so, that her resemblance to her departed mother seemed to increase every day. I loved to trace the likeness, and the dear little creature, encouraged by my fondness, became even more familiar with me than with her nurse. She had all her mother's sweetness of temper, and gentle nature, which was revealed whenever anything occurred that might have irritated a child with a less placid disposition, yet she possessed a degree of sensibility seldom met with in one so docile and equal tempered. Before we reached Naples, she had so endeared herself to me, that I could hardly bear her out of my sight, and she, dear child, was never so happy as when with me.

Dr. Martelli had given me a letter of introduction to an old friend of his at Naples, a man of great erudition, and owner of one of the best libraries there. He had described this friend as a *savant*, devoted to literary and scientific pursuits, who mingled rarely, if ever, in the busy world, but who would be sure to receive with kindness any person recommended to his notice by him. I was almost tempted not to call and leave the letter. I dreaded making a new acquaintance that might draw me into others; but recollecting the advantage I had derived from Dr. Martelli's society, I conquered my repugnance, and left his letter and my card at the door of Il Signor Bertucci.

I had taken up my abode at the Victoria Hotel, and had been so fortunate as to secure a sitting-room commanding a view of the Bay, and of the Villa Reale. The weather was beautiful, a cloudless sky, as blue as it was ever represented in those *aquarelle drawings*, so highly tinted as to make one doubt of their accuracy, *was reflected on the unruffled bosom of the sea, which resembled*

a vast lake; and so joyous, so beautiful was the scene that I beheld from my window, so genial the air, that even I, for a few minutes was sensible of its influence, and acknowledged that the description of the charms of Naples which I had hitherto believed to have been exaggerated, did not exceed the reality. To the right of the hotel rose an amphitheatre of steep tuffa rocks, seen above the stately dwellings of the Chiaja, crowned with picturesque buildings, intermixed with gardens and groves.

The Chateau St. Elmo, with its turrets and spires, was conspicuous, and extending from it were the green heights of the beautiful Villas of the Floridiana and Belvedere, with their stately terraces glittering in the sun; and beyond them the convent-crowned steep of the Camaldoli. The Villa Reale, separating the Chiaja from the sea, which laves its wall lay in front with all its flowering plants and rare trees; while in the distance was seen the Isles of Ischia and Procida, set as sparkling jewels in the azure sea. — In the middle of the Bay Capri rose as a giant, to protect its entrance; and to the left, lay the coast of Castellamare, and the heights of the vine-covered Sorento. I gazed on this scene of enchantment until half intoxicated by its bewildering beauty, I closed my eyes. And then came the reflection of, where was she who would have shared my rapture at this view? and tears started to them.

Oh! if she who was sleeping in her far-off grave, could be restored to me, what more on earth could I desire, but wanting her to share my pleasure, an aching void was felt in my heart, and I arose and left the window. — My child was at that moment led into the room by her nurse, and after embracing me, she would have me take her to the window I had so lately quitted. She looked around for some time in speechless pleasure, and then clapping her little hands joyously, exclaimed “Oh! how pitty! how pitty!” Even while partaking the repast prepared for her, *she kept continually turning her eyes to the window, utter-*

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ing, "Papa, how pitty," to the evident surprise and satisfaction of the waiter, who had rarely, perhaps never, seen a child so young, sensible of the beauty of the view from the Victoria. This enthusiasm was not shared by the nurse, who seemed no more moved by the dazzling scene, than if she were contemplating a turnpike road, of the most ordinary description, while she observed to me, "Miss Herbert, I am afraid, Sir, is not quite well, she has been very restless and fidgetty ever since she has been in the hotel, and I suspect she is a little feverish, for she wants to be at the window, which shows she requires air."

If the pure atmosphere and exquisite beauty of the scene before me surprised and delighted me by day, it was no less lovely by night, for no sooner had the short twilight, which falls so suddenly, and fades into night so rapidly, disappeared, than the moon, bright as "one entire and perfect chrysolite," arose in unclouded radiance, its beams quivering on the rippling bosom of the blue sea, and silvering the objects around.

The lights from the windows of the lofty buildings that front the bay and crown the range of the amphitheatre, that forms the back ground, fell like columns of bright gold across the silvertinted undulations of the calm sea, giving it a most brilliant and wonderful effect. Boats filled by gay parties, whence the sweet sounds of music were wafted to the shore, dotted the bay, casting their dark shadows like little islets on its bright surface, while phosphorescent lights produced by every stroke of the oars gave the whole scene an almost magical effect. I gazed, marvelling at its beauty, but my mind was not attuned to the scene; and those before whom, when bowed down by sorrow, some brilliant exhibition is suddenly presented, can alone sympathize in my feelings as I did so. It was like a jar of discord in the midst of harmony, and I turned from it in increased gloom.

*And there were hundreds contemplating, with pleasure,*

that bright and ever-moving picture which awakened only sad thoughts in me! Alas! to enjoy such sights the mind must be tranquil, the heart content. The mourners bearing their loved dead to the grave, turn not with a keener pang from the encounter of a joyous throng of vociferous merry-makers, than I did from the exhilarating prospect commanded from the window of the Victoria, and the sounds of light laughter from the gay crowds passing beneath it.

The next morning, before I had finished my breakfast, Il Signor Bertucci was announced. He had, as he told me, come to offer his services as a cicerone, adding, with urbanity, that he entertained so high an esteem, and so warm a friendship for Doctor Martelli, that he would feel pleasure in being useful to any one recommended to his acquaintance by him.

Signor Bertucci was tall and slight, appeared to be about fifty years old, had a high and intellectual brow, around which, a few locks, tinged with silver, clustered, and had that paleness of complexion peculiar to studious men. I never saw a more benevolent expression of countenance, nor met with a more pleasing manner. The ease of a well-bred man of the world, was mingled with a certain gravity that proved he was a thoughtful character. I felt a strong prepossession in his favour before we had spent half an hour together, and accepted his offer to conduct me to the Musée Borbonico. The nurse, as was her habit, brought my little girl into the room, to see me before I went out, and had I not previously been disposed to like my new acquaintance, the interest which he immediately conceived for her, would have achieved the conquest of my good-will.

"It is only when I behold children like this," said he, "that I regret not having married. My youth was so devoted to study, that I feared a bookworm like myself would have made but a sorry husband to a fair wife. Women, and more especially the *youthful and handsome*, expect to engross a greater portion of



their husband's time than a studious man would be disposed to give. Hence disappointment would ensue, and consequences result which I never had courage to contemplate, so I am now a solitary old man, instead of being like you, Sir, a happy father. To educate a creature like this," and he patted my little Frances's head, "to train her mind, and to see it expand, must be a source of the most enviable happiness."

The child, as if she could comprehend his kind feelings, smiled in his face, and extended her hands towards him, and when he took her up in his arms held her rosy lips to his to be kissed.

"The Romans," said he, "ages ago, pronounced the English to be angels, when they first saw them at Rome; and looking on this beautiful child, I feel disposed to agree with the Romans in opinion, for I never saw so lovely a creature. How cold, how cheerless seems the life of a solitary recluse, shut up with his musty tomes, when compared with the ever increasing interest of such a companion as this. You smile, Sir, but an intelligent child is the most interesting companion in the world."

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## CHAPTER XLIII.

FORTUNATE was it for me, that I made the acquaintance of Il Signor Bertucci, for my mind, not strong enough to lean on itself, required companionship with one of a more vigorous calibre to sustain it, and prevent its subsiding into the moodiness to which it was prone. Constitution and temperament have much influence in forming the character of man. My health, never robust, had become uncertain, and every disease made a more serious impression on it than on that of others, while such was the nervousness of my temperament that I shrank from general society, with an innate dread, lest in it some annoyance might await me.

Nothing is more calculated to convey an unfavourable impression of a man than his avoidance of society. There ever enters some portion of wounded *amour propre*, in the opinions men pronounce on those who are unwilling to form acquaintance with them, and consequently their strictures are never charitable.

At Signor Bertucci's, I met several of my countrymen, who eagerly sought his acquaintance, so general was the appreciation of his erudition, and urbanity, and who perceiving his good will towards me, were willing to accept mine, on trust of his well known high reputation. An unconquerable timidity on my part, led to my holding back from their advances, and every acquaintance thus avoided, became from that hour, a secret, if not an avowed enemy.

"I must," some of them said, "know that there was *something against me*, or I would not betray such extraordinary



coldness to my own countrymen." They could discover no reason why *their* acquaintance should not be readily accepted, but they were ready to divine why *mine*, notwithstanding their having sought it, might be objectionable. Others accused me of an insolent *hauteur* which merited correction; but none suspected that delicate health, joined to constitutional shyness and reserve, were the sole causes of my avoidance of them. There happened to be some three or four English noblemen at that time at Naples, and they were appealed to by these gentlemen, to declare whether they had ever known me in England, or heard anything to my disadvantage there. Their avowal that they did not know me was received by their compatriots as nothing short of a proof of my unworthiness.

Not to have the honour of the acquaintance of such distinguished noblemen argued that I must be some very obscure individual, who, conscious of his own demerits, naturally shrank from forming acquaintanceship with those who might be so condescending as to make advances to him. All this, and much more, was insinuated to the Signor Bertucci in a mode very likely to have prejudiced him against me; but he, like his countrymen in general, was little disposed to listen to slander, whether openly expressed or cautiously insinuated. He shrugged his shoulders, told my enemies that his friend Dr. Martelli would never have introduced an unworthy acquaintance to him, and continued to treat me with a kindness of which I was deeply sensible.

"Your countrymen, Mr. Herbert," said he to me one day, after we had grown into habits of closer intimacy, "are strange people. I suppose that their tempers are soured by the frequent changes in your climate so injurious to the nerves, for I have known many, and never met above two or three who were not *disposed to deery each other*. If acquainted, they have told me

such spiteful things; and if not, have formed such severe, and often unjust, conclusions of those they meet. They expose all the faults they detect, assailing their possessors with poignant ridicule, while to the unknown they attribute all imaginable evil. What can be the cause of this, if your northern climate be not to blame? I have been acquainted with several Englishmen, and found them sensible, well-informed, and agreeable, when I met *only one* at a time; but the moment a second appeared in the field, the good qualities of both became immediately deteriorated. *Hauteur*, reserve, and dislike, marked their manner; and I have discovered afterwards, that no other cause existed for the exercise of these disagreeable indications of *mauvais goût*, than that they were not of the same politics, had not been brought up in the same university, did not live in the same clique, or did not hunt with the same hounds. Strange causes, *n'est-ce-pas*, for dislike? and strangers, observing their manner of treating each other, would very naturally be led to conclude that one, if not both the individuals, had committed some action that ought to exclude him from society.

“Your countrymen are considered proud; but the peculiarity of deerying each other, to which I have referred, induces me to think that, *au contraire*, they are deficient in pride; that is, at least, national pride, which is, perhaps, the only pardonable one. What can be a surer indication of this, than the way in which they expose the defects, known or suspected, of each other? Now, we Italians endeavour to conceal the errors of our fellow-countrymen. If we know no good of them, we abstain from attributing evil; and when we meet those with whom we are unacquainted, we treat them with the same civility we should exercise towards any other gentleman in the society; and are really pained to hear anything said to their disadvantage before strangers, thinking it may give a bad impression of our country. *How often has it occurred to me to hear one Englishman say, ‘O!*

so you know Mr. A. or B.?' and I have answered, 'Yes, I have that pleasure.'

"'You call it a pleasure, do you?'

"And a sarcastic smile passes over the lips of the speaker.

"'Yes, I really think it a pleasure, for he is well-informed and agreeable.'

"'Indeed! I was not aware of this.'

"And the gentleman draws up his head, and looks supercilious.

"'Perhaps you are not well acquainted with him?'

"'No, I have not that honour; and, to say the truth, I do not desire it.'

"And he looks more contemptuous than before.

"'If not an indiscretion, may I venture to inquire if you know anything to his disadvantage?'

"'Why, perhaps not positively so, but he is a person not belonging to my circle.'

"'He might possibly, if questioned, say that you did belong to his,' said I.

"'But as mine is far superior to his — in fact, mine is the *exclusive* circle, he could not say, that is, he could not think himself as well placed in society.'

"'But, pardon my ignorance, do tell me what constitutes the difference of the two circles?'

"'The difference is perfectly defined by us, but to a foreigner I really can hardly make it understood. The exclusive to which I appertain are a set of men of high birth, good fortune, and certain pretensions to *savoir vivre*, which are acknowledged by the *haut ton*. We draw around us a *cordons sanitaire*, which we permit not to be passed. We live together, frequent the same *clubs*, *dine at the same houses*, pay our court to the same women, *reside in the same quarter of the town*, and vote all whom we do

not admit into our *coterie*, to be quite of another grade in society.'

"'But is it not the extreme of injustice, first to exclude men, and then blame them for the exclusion?'

"'How, without exclusion, could we keep our circle sufficiently select?'

"'Does talent, fortune, or station, ever induce you to give an *entrée* to this circle of yours?'

"'Not often; and never until the individual possessing any of these advantages has been recognised by the world in general, and by the world of fashion in particular, as being worthy of this distinction.'

"'And when you meet in foreign lands a fellow-countryman, who belongs not to your circle at home, you avoid him, even though you may know him to be a perfect gentleman?'

"'Most decidedly, for were we to form any acquaintance with him abroad, we should be compelled to leave him off in London.'

"'What, if you found him clever, agreeable, and amiable?'

"'Yes, for otherwise we should have all our clique inquiring, "Where on earth did you pick up that strange man? Has your new friend a house?" "I dare say he lives at the other side of Oxford-street, and thinks the denizens of Portman-square and Portland-place vastly genteel!" This is what our set would say, and end by entreating one not to introduce the strange man to them.'

"'And pray what is the harm of living at the other side of Oxford-street, in Portman-square, or Portland-place? May a man not live where he pleases in London?'

"'Not if he wishes to belong to the best society, that is to the exclusive — *par exemple*, to mine. We live in certain parts of London, and vote all who inhabit the places which we reject, *bores* — *vulgar* — *mauvais ton* *enfin*.'

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“‘But can the street or square in which a man resides, change his character or claims on society.’

“‘Not his character, but certainly his position.’

“Such, Signor Herbert, have been the reasons often given to me by some of your countrymen for avoiding the acquaintance of others of their own nation, men, I assure you, whom I have found clever, well-informed, and perfectly gentleman-like.”

I confessed to Signor Bertucci that I had mixed little in society in England, and had very few acquaintances. Indeed none among the aristocracy, because it had so fallen out that I had never met any of that class, and even if I had, my station in life, that of a private country gentleman of small fortune, living in a very secluded part of Wales, must have prevented my making any advances towards persons so much my superiors in rank and fortune.

“You were right, Sir,” observed he. “Unequal positions in life, present a great obstacle to agreeable association. The great expect a certain homage from those beneath them in station, a homage which a man of independent mind, and conscious of his own worth and respectability, would seldom be disposed to offer to mere rank or fortune. Every man is best in the circle in which his birth and merit has placed him, where *he* is not compelled to look up, nor his associates obliged to look down.”

Often did my new friend come and spend his evenings with me at the Victoria hotel, and still more frequently did I pass mine in his home. Together we visited the Musée Borbonico, and inspected the treasures it contained. He was deeply skilled in antiquarian lore, and loved to make his knowledge of it available to others. He was a patient investigator of all connected with his favourite study, but maintained none of the fanciful hypotheses, in which so many antiquaries indulge, — hypotheses that, *instead of elucidating* the subjects much more frequently, *tend to involve them in doubt*. He could, from the extent of his

researches, as readily class the age to which any object or work of art belonged, as an able geologist could ascertain by the different strata of lava found at Pompeii, which of the various eruptions that have visited that ancient town, had deposited it. Nor was his knowledge confined to the lore of the ancients. Perfectly conversant with the history of the middle ages, he was no less skilled in the interesting memorials they have left behind.

A mind so filled with knowledge, and so ready to bring forth its stores for the advantage of others, offered me a source of instruction and pleasure, which kept my thoughts from dwelling on the grief that still preyed on my heart. There it lay, slumbering occasionally it is true, but often awaking; and, like a child on first being aroused from sleep, demanding the object that had been dearest.

Signor Bertucci accompanied me to the interesting environs of Naples, was my Cicerone at Herculaneum and Pompeii, and made me acquainted with all concerning them. It was when contemplating these celebrated places, so long hidden from the world, that my grief was least bitterly felt. I was reminded of the brevity of life and human suffering, as I gazed on the wreck of ages before me, — wrecks that have so long survived the beings who had raised, who had inhabited them. As well, thought I, might we be inconsolable for some beloved friend who sets out on a journey some time before we can follow to join him, as sorrow as I have done for that most beloved one, whom I may soon be summoned to join. What are we but fleeting shadows? that glide away, and are in as short a time forgotten, as the flowers that droop and fade, ere autumn has passed! But the sunshine — the gaiety of Naples, and its joyous denizens, produced only dissonance in my feelings; so, having seen all most *worthy of attention* in it, I proceeded to Palermo, deeply re-

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greeting Signor Bertucci, from whose society I had derived so much consolation and instruction.

My child was now my constant companion. The genial clime of Italy had operated on her frame and mind, as on the plants confided to its soil. She had grown rapidly; her health was more vigorous, and her young intellect expanded, as a flower opens its petals to the smile of the sun. She noticed every thing novel around her; would listen with delight to the songs of the sailors, as our vessel floated over the blue Mediterranean, and would clap her hands with transport, when she beheld the sun-beams playing on its bosom. "That child has already the temperament of a poet," had Signor Bertucci often observed, when he noticed the pleasure she took in objects seldom remarked by children. "I can behold it," has he said, "revealing itself as light does through a vase of alabaster. May it tend to her happiness, and the restoration of yours! We live again in those dear to us, after our own hopes have been dashed to the earth; and you, my friend, will once more be able to endure sunshine, when you witness the delight it gives your daughter."

Often have I prayed, that the cares and sorrows that had fallen on my head might avert misfortune from my child. Nay, it soothed me to think that as a certain portion of misery must be dealt out to mortals, that in the large one that had fallen to my share had been included that meant for my offspring. I would watch over her whilst she slumbered, keep off the flies and musquitoes from her pillow, observe every change in her lovely face, listen to her soft breathing, and murmur blessings when she smiled. She seemed every day to grow more like her lost mother, and this increasing resemblance made me dote on her still more. She, too, loved me fondly, — was never so happy as when seated on my knee, her head nestling in my breast, or her dear *dimpled* arms twined around my neck. Even the sailors as well *as the passengers* took a fancy to the dear little creature, she was

so sweet tempered, and so lively. Every one had a smile and a kind word for her, which she failed not to recognise by kissing her hand, and nodding to them when they passed. A doting mother never felt more pride at seeing her child admired, than I did at witnessing the homage offered to mine. She was now the sole object of interest to me in life, — the only possession of which I could be proud. No wonder then that I loved her with all the intensity of passion peculiar to a nature like mine, — that she became my idol!

Arrived at Palermo, its picturesque beauty, even though seen after that of Naples, struck me with surprise and admiration. Being so much less frequented by strangers, too, than the city I had left, I felt that I should be more at my ease here, and I rejoiced that I had come, though I still regretted leaving the Signor Bertucci, and could not hope to meet at Palermo so accomplished an acquaintance, or so kind a friend. Determined to make some stay in this beautiful place, I engaged a small but charming villa, in the vicinity of the very fine one of the Prince Buttera, and, in a few days, was comfortably established in it, assisted by the banker to whom my letter of credit was addressed, and who procured me the villa on much more moderate terms than I could have obtained it for.

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## CHAPTER XLIV.

THE interest awakened in my mind by the society of Signor Bertucci led me to a course of reading that filled up many hours of the day; and when I laid down my book, I would devote some time to my little daughter, whose intelligence afforded me a never-failing source of pride and gratification. The novelty of the scenes around me, awakening new trains of thought, and the habit of reading I had lately acquired, proved so salutary a medicine for my diseased and morbid mind, that I began to taste the blessings still left me, and to look back on the past as a troublous dream. Had this love of reading possessed me during the first year of my marriage, what a difference might it not have produced in my fate, by withdrawing my attention from the one sad subject of my incessant contemplation. Unfortunate must that man be who has no fixed occupation, and who seeks not to give himself that most delightful of all — study. The mind must be employed or it reacts, and becomes a prey to every chagrin that assails it. Ask the mourner when bowed down by grief, whence he has derived relief, and he must confess that study alone afforded it. The pleasures of society, the gaieties of life, but aggravate the pangs of regret; but the solitude of a quiet room, and a book that engrosses the thoughts, offer a balm that with time brings consolation, without banishing that pensive memory of those we have lost, which we should hate ourselves were we not to cherish it. And yet when reading the works that most interested me, often have I laid them down with a sense of *painful regret*, that she to whom my memory so constantly reverted had never shared with me the new gratification I had dis-

covered. How would it have sweetened many of those long and wretched hours when, wholly absorbed by gloomy reflections on the past, I was laying up a store of future misery! for the habit of indulging such, grows on the unhappy individual who gives way to it, until, his feelings rendered morbid, he becomes wretched himself, and is the cause of wretchedness to others. My beloved Louisa too, had a natural taste for reading, and had I encouraged it, would have been solaced by having her thoughts drawn away from painful subjects. How many hours might I not thus have snatched from care, and what a new bond of sympathy might I not have established between us, by the perusal of the same works, the cultivation of the same tastes.

The banker to whom my letter of credit was addressed, invited me to his house, and introduced me to two or three English merchants established at Palermo, who were desirous of showing attention to me as their countryman. They were sensible, well-disposed men, wholly occupied in making money, and consoled for present devotion to business, and the sacrifices it entailed, by the prospect of returning to their native land some years hence, when a sufficient fortune had been amassed to satisfy their notions of comfort. They had already passed many years at Palermo, and the snowy locks that shaded their furrowed brows denoted that they had turned the sunny side of life, and made a considerable progress in the descent of that hill, at whose base lies the open grave that awaits them. Nevertheless they were talking with vivacity of future plans, when they should be enabled to leave off the toil for gold, and return to enjoy the remnant of their days in England. They had lived in the admirable climate and beneath the cloudless skies of Sicily, until habit had pallied the sense of the blessings bestowed by both, and looked forward with pleasure to the cold and cheerless clime of their native land, the disagreeableness of which they had forgotten in their long absence from it. They thought not that habit

had rendered the mild and genial atmosphere they had now so long and thanklessly enjoyed, necessary for their health, and that, arrived at the winter of life, that country to which they longed to return was little suited to warm the blood chilled by age, or to enliven the spirits depressed from the same cause.

"Strange!" said Mr. Mitford, one of these English merchants, to me, "when we first came here, my wife and I were enchanted with Palermo; the constant sunshine, the clear and light atmosphere, and the gaiety of the people delighted us. But now we are tired of all this, and long to exchange it for England. That is the country in which to sit down and expend the fortunes acquired elsewhere. There a man is valued for his wealth; here, no one cares what his fortune may be. He is not a bit the more valued for it, for the necessities, nay, even the luxuries of life are so cheap, that those who do not possess one quarter of his wealth can enjoy as many comforts as he does, and he has not even the pleasure of knowing that he is envied for his riches. Now, in England every one knows when a man is wealthy, and more still, people are always prone to magnify his fortune, and to treat him with the consideration it inspires. The necessities of life are dear, and the luxuries unattainable except by the rich, so that a wealthy man knows that he is in the possession of many advantages denied to the less fortunate than himself. The rarity of sunshine, and the frigidity of the climate, induces him to adopt all appliances to atone for the absence of the one, and the chilliness of the other. When a man is sunning himself in a beautiful conservatory into which the windows of his sitting-rooms open, and is warmed by a *calorifère* diffusing warmth and equal temperature around his dwelling, he need not regret the sunshine and mild climate of Palermo, which he only shared in common with the poorest Lazzarone in the place."

*Such was the reasoning of the Englishmen at Palermo, and such I believe is the reasoning of most of my countrymen when*

far from home, and making money to enjoy themselves when they return to it.

With such men I had nothing in common. I was content to share the sunshine of Sicily with the very insects that basked in it, and liked it all the better, that the poor enjoyed it too. This want of sympathy in our tastes and feelings soon made itself felt. They discovered that I was deficient in patriotism, in finding so much good elsewhere than in my native land, and I found them illiberal and purse proud, so our intercourse, after some time, was reduced to occasional formal visits, and never grew into friendship. When I had been about a month in Palermo, walking out one evening, to my surprise and dismay I encountered the man on earth I most wished to avoid, and who I had hoped never again to behold. Figgins, the odious Figgins stood before me. He gazed insolently in my face, never even touching his hat as he approached me, and said, "I see you are more surprised than pleased at this meeting. It however was inevitable, and as I want to speak to you without interruption, we had better walk outside the town."

"You can have nothing to say to me," replied I, "that I can wish to hear;" my thoughts running on what course I had best pursue in the present emergency, as on my conduct *now* I felt that my future position with this ruffian must depend. Should I appeal to my banker, and the English merchants I knew, for their aid against a fellow who had formed a plot to extort money from me? These thoughts glanced much more rapidly through my mind than I can indite them, but not so rapidly as not to betray irresolution by my countenance, to him who was eagerly examining it. Even in the brief interval I remembered that my intercourse with my banker was but slight, and that my countrymen, mortified that I had not evinced a greater desire to cultivate their acquaintance, had latterly treated me with only a distant civility. I should *therefore, in all probability, find them little disposed to judge*

favourably of me in a case which required a more than ordinary good-will to insure me their assistance to defeat the mercenary scheme of Figgins, and this conviction operated to quell the lagging courage I was endeavouring to summon up to resist him.

"Since you left Nice," said this scoundrel, "I have been unfortunate at play. I had been so lucky with you, that I determined to try still further my luck; but fortune, the blind jade! has jilted me, and again I am obliged to have recourse to you. I want money, and therefore I have followed you here."

"You have no claim on me," answered I, anger and hatred operating so powerfully on me, that had a pistol been within my reach, I should not have hesitated to have shot this wretch.

"No claim on you?" repeated Figgins; "well, that's cool, however. I'll make you know, ay, and feel too, that I have a claim, and the best of all claims, that of the strong over the weak, the innocent over the guilty. The same reason that made you buy my silence at Nice still exists, and is strengthened by your having once paid for it. I will instantly go and denounce you to a magistrate, unless you comply with my demand. Ay, you may look as furious as you like. Had you bodily strength enough to do it, you would kill me on the spot, and so get rid of me, as you did of the poor girl you murdered; but I could master ten like you, and so you feel at this moment, so it's no use your trying your tricks with me."

O! the rage, the intense hate, that filled my breast as I listened to this wretch! A demon seemed to have entered my heart, banishing from it every feeling of man, and planting in their stead a thirst of vengeance that maddened me.

"It's no use putting yourself in such a passion," said Figgins, with a malicious sneer; "what's the good of it? You'd be but as a child in my hands, if we came to try our strength, and all the *anger in the world* won't change me. Money I want, and money *I will have; and I swear, that if you don't come down with the*

sum I require, I will instantly go and denounce you. I asked you too little before: I was a fool for not knowing better the value of your secret: I *now* am wiser, and therefore, insist on five hundred pounds more. That sum paid, you shall not be troubled by me again."

Why, oh! why did my good angel then sleep? Why did not the insolence of this hardened villain rouse me into resistance? O! shame to manhood, to stand paltering thus with a wretch, instead of defying him! Yet, such was the dread his threat of exposure had inspired in my soul, that, fascinated like the hapless bird which drops down to the serpent who menaces it, I yielded to the instinct of terror, and basely condescended to make terms with this ruffian.

"When I gave you so large a sum before," said I, "it was with the perfect understanding that never more were you to make any demand on me."

"Nor should I," interrupted he, "had I not been so unlucky at play. But what was I to do, when the money you gave me was all gone at the gaming-house? It was like a dream, and when I looked at my empty purse, I felt as if you had never filled it. There was nothing left for me to do, but to make you fill it again, so I determined to follow you, and here I am. You thought to deceive me by changing your route, but it was useless. I have my spies every where, and you can no more hide yourself from me, than I can live without money, and that's one of the most difficult things I know."

"But were I to give you money, the sum you have named is absurd, and out of the question; what security should I have that you were never more to make any demand on me?" observed I, covered with shame and confusion at parleying with such a villain.

"What security?" repeated he, with a derisive smile;



"why, my word of honour, to be sure. What other security can I give?"

"*Your* word of honour!" said I; and a portion of the contempt and abhorrence he inspired was expressed in my countenance.

"Don't provoke me, don't provoke me," replied he; "for if you do, I may demand double the sum I have named; and I am as obstinate as an Irish pig when I am made angry."

"Will you swear, on your oath, that if I give you two hundred pounds more, you will never again appear before me, nor address me by letter?"

"Just as if my word of honour wasn't quite as binding as my oath!" And Figgins leered in my face, while I groaned in spirit, being fully convinced that no more reliance could be placed on one than on the other.

"I can only give you two hundred," resumed I. "Mine is not a fortune to admit of throwing away such sums."

"Do you call throwing it away, when your character, your very life, depends on my silence?" demanded he. "You cannot impose on me. I know as well as you do, that to save my life you would not give me a guinea, were you not in my power; and I am not at all disposed to throw away my advantage over you."

Stung to desperation by his insolence, I declared that I would give no more than two hundred, let the consequences be what they might; and after some attempts on his part to extort more, which I resisted, he at length consented to accept that sum; and I desired him to meet me on the same spot in an hour from that time, when I would bring him the money.

"Why not give me a cheque on your banker here?" said he.

"Because I don't choose it," replied I, angrily.

"Only take care of what you are about," observed Figgins; "*for if you play any tricks, I'll go at once to the magistrate, and have you arrested.*"

I glanced scornfully at him, and walked towards home to get my letter of credit, and proceed with it to the banker's for the money. I noticed that he followed me, at a little distance, keeping me in view all the time until I entered my house; and when I again left it to go to the bank, he never lost sight of me. There must have been some indication of the tumult of my mind in my aspect or manner, for the banker asked me if I were unwell. This simple question embarrassed me, and I stammered out that I had only a slight head-ache.

"You must take care of yourself, Mr. Herbert," observed he. "This climate, genial and fine as it is, is apt to disagree with strangers at first; and you feally look feverish, and ill."

I proceeded to the spot where I had appointed to meet my persecutor, bearing the gold in a small sack, which I had great trouble in preventing my banker from insisting on sending to my house by one of his clerks.

Figgins had dogged me the whole time, and now, having walked on before me to the place of meeting, stopped, and waited for my approach.

"Lay down the money," cried he. "I don't want to come too near you. You may have a pistol as well as a sack of gold in your pocket; and I don't want to tempt you to commit another murder."

"Wretch!" exclaimed I, "he who should rid the earth of you, would render a service to the world."

"Come, come, no hard words if you please. Remember, I have never killed any one yet, and that's more than you can say," replied he.

I threw the sack to him, and turned away, maddened by the sense of my dependence on such a villain.

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## CHAPTER XLV.

FROM this hour, I felt that there was no security for me from the base wretch who was the master of my destiny. I had the conviction that he would pursue me wherever I might go, and that I should never escape from his power. Who could describe the deep sense of shame, the bitter humiliation and misery this thralldom must inflict on a man possessed of one gentlemanly feeling, one noble sentiment. I writhed under it, and loathed myself for having meanly, basely, yielded to the first attempt at extortion of Figgins.

What was I to do, where was I to fly, in order to elude his vigilance? Again my tortured mind became a prey to despair, and lost the energy to resist the morbid gloom into which I was sinking. When I embraced my child, that creature dearer to me a thousand times than life, her sweet and innocent smiles seemed to reproach me for having entailed dishonour and disgrace on her name.

Although her blessed mother had escaped the bitter pangs that my exposure must have inflicted, had she lived, was not my child's destiny endangered? Could I count for a day, an hour, on the silence of Figgins, who, when I least expected it, might suddenly stand before me as of late, and dictate terms again?

How could my fortune, far from large, resist the heavy inroads made in it by the extortion of this man? Yes, this fortune which should have been the provision of my daughter, would inevitably dwindle away under his demands, until beggary *became my portion*; and Oh, how infinitely worse! that of the *daughter on whom I doted*. Would it not be better for me to lay

down the load of life, now too heavy to be borne, and thus escape the fangs of the monster whom I dreaded? But to leave my child to rush, unbidden, into the dread presence of my offended God! Oh! no; I dared not commit the foul crime of self-murder; and yet existence was hateful, was insupportable to me. My brain throbbed in agony, my reason was bewildered, as I reflected on my terrible condition. Human aid it was vain to expect. I had permitted myself to be so closely entwined in the fold of the serpent that held me, that I saw no possibility of rescue. But this utter despair of human aid reminded me of Heavenly succour. I knelt and prayed for support to my Heavenly Father, and felt calmed and strengthened when I arose from my supplications.

For some days after my interview with the vile Figgins, I never went out without expecting to meet him. Every man of his stature that I beheld at a distance I imagined to be him, and I was disposed to turn back, so much did I dislike encountering him; but I worked my courage up to confront him, and was repaid for the effort by discovering the person, whose height was similar, not to be him. Haunted by the dread of another demand from him, my very dreams presenting his odious countenance and abominable leer, I felt that change of scene was absolutely necessary to divert my thoughts from this one painful subject which now engrossed them, banishing gentler and holier ones, as well as the *one* terrible event that had entailed all the misery of my life.

That event, which for years had filled my mind, had faded away before the actual danger that this wretch Figgins menaced me with. The dread of him became a positive monomania. He assumed gigantic proportions, and demoniacal propensities and power in my troubled slumbers. He grasped me in his iron arms, he held me, balancing me as if a helpless infant over steep *precipices*, projecting far into the sea, into which I expected


every moment to be hurled. At other times my dreams presented him dragging me into a court of justice, at which presided gibbering fiends, who laughed aloud when he denounced my crime, and held out their arms to seize me, when, screaming in terror, the large drops wrung by agony falling from my brow, I awoke, to thank Heaven it was but a dream.

I began to tremble for my reason. The agitated nights, the impending dread that haunted me through the day, could not, I felt, much longer continue without driving me mad. Sometimes it occurred to me to travel in the East. In that remote quarter of the globe I might elude my tormentor, and drag on the remainder of my days free from dread. But then came the thought of my child. I could not bear to part from her; and to expose her to the risks and dangers of Eastern climes was not to be thought of. In all my misery, her smiles, her artless affection, were the only drops of balm to sweeten my bitter cup of life; and, as I gazed on her beautiful face, so like her blessed mother's, I felt that, rather than it should ever wear the blush of shame occasioned by the exposure of her wretched father, I would submit to every privation, every humiliation, that man could undergo.

Now that my abode at Palermo was known to Figgins, I became so unsettled and nervous lest he should return to extort money from me, that I determined to leave it and return to Naples, where, after a short stay, I would travel homeward. Two or three days after I had formed this resolution, my banker called on me, and after some apologies for the liberty he was about to take, but which, as he asserted, a sentiment of goodwill towards me prompted, he told me, with much circumlocution, that reports very prejudicial to my character had been circulated by an Englishman of low manners and habits who had *lately left Palermo*.

*"The fact is," said he, "this person, in a state of intoxi-*

cation, obtruded himself into the news-room, which is an establishment supported by subscription, for the sole use of Sicilian gentlemen, and to which, by courtesy, the English merchants resident here are admitted, but have not the privilege of introducing others. Seeing some of his countrymen enter, the individual in question forced his way into the room in spite of the representation and remonstrances of the porter; and when one or two of the English gentlemen explained to him that strangers were excluded, he pulled out a considerable sum in gold to prove his respectability, declared he could bring you to certify that he was a gentleman, and had only come to Palermo to visit you; and these asseverations not being deemed satisfactory reasons for violating the regulations of the establishment, he grew irate, insulted all the members who were present, and anger, combined with intoxication, having wholly mastered him, he swore that, little as the members seemed to think of him, he could make you, whom probably they respected, tremble at his nod. These strange expressions excited the curiosity of some of those present, who, piqued by your evident avoidance of cultivating an acquaintance with them, are not favourably disposed towards you. By affecting to doubt the insinuations of this low man, they stung him into asserting that no later than the preceding day he had compelled you to give him no less a sum than two hundred pounds, which he made you go to your banker to procure, which sum he declared he could show them; nay, more, that he could compel you to give him as much more whenever he pleased, as he held your fate in his hands. I was not present when this scene occurred, but soon after, two of your countrymen called on me, and inquired whether you had not the previous day drawn from my bank two hundred pounds in gold. I acknowledged that such had been the case, little thinking that, by so doing, I was confirming the evil suspicions these persons had formed of you. *I knew not the motive of their inquiry; and only discovered it to-*



day, when I found that the vile insinuations of a low drunkard had been received as evidence against you, and that your countrymen have been searching every where for this man, in order to have him examined, and an investigation made into your connexion with him. I have come to inform you of this disagreeable affair. The man who has caused it, left by the packet early the next morning for Naples; but the persons who have made themselves so officious here have written to their correspondent at Naples to gain intelligence of this man, giving a minute description of his person and dress, by which they hope to discover him, they not having been able to ascertain his name."

My feelings during this statement can be easily imagined. Shame, rage, and terror, in turn assailed me. I made a violent effort to conceal my emotion, but it must have been an unsuccessful one, for the banker, with much good nature said, "I see you are shocked, disgusted, and no wonder; that your countryman should lend credence to the assertions of a man evidently of a low station in life, and by their own account intoxicated while he made them, does seem as strange as it is uncalled for. I have expressed my sentiments on the subject to them, but finding that they were determined to busy themselves in the matter, I have thought it a duty I owed to you, to make you acquainted with the business."

I thanked Signor Magatti with as much calmness as I could assume. I feared to deny having seen the wretch Figgins at Palermo, lest by so doing I should compromise myself still more. In fact, my having drawn the two hundred pounds on the day he had named, which could be only known at the bank, and to myself, unless *he* had been informed of it by some one in the bank, or by me, was a positive proof of at least a portion of his assertion. Then the gold he had displayed furnished another evidence *against me*, and I felt so inextricably involved that I knew not *what to offer in my own defence*. At length I ventured to say that

though I did not acknowledge the right of the two gentlemen named to interfere in my concerns, it had become positively necessary for me to set out with as little delay as possible for Naples, in order to discover and punish the impostor who had dared to make use of my name. There was no need for me to affect indignation, for my bosom swelled with it, and my anger had such an influence with Signor Magatti, that he entered warmly into my feelings, and appeared convinced that I had been slandered. "Had you not better see, or write to your two countrymen here?" said he, "you may quote me as your informant of the active part they have taken in this affair. Or I will go with you to them, for I really think the sooner their tongues are stopped on this subject, the better."

I felt that were I to decline his offer, it would make him think ill of me, and this I was unwilling should be the case, for I knew that he was on terms of intimacy with Signor Bertucci, and would in all probability inform him of my refusal to confront those who had so unjustifiably taken a part against me. And yet, with all my pride and reserve, how painful was it for me to seek these men, and to enter with them on a subject so humiliating. But it must be done. I must drain the cup of mortification to its very dregs, or leave Signor Magatti to believe me culpable; so I assented to his proposal, and set out with him to seek my countrymen. I found them at home, and not being together, they were less untractable than might otherwise possibly have been the case. I stated the cause of my visit, which each in turn seemed to anticipate the moment I entered his abode; for never did I behold two men more confounded than when I demanded by what right they had, on the faith only of some low and drunken ruffian, presumed to attribute crime or guilt to me, or to take on themselves to institute inquiries on the subject.

My indignation and anger, which were unfeigned, seemed to convey to them a conviction that I had nothing to fear; and in



proportion to my spirit, became their want of it. They evidently had not expected that I would have thus boldly confronted them; and when I threatened legal proceedings, they expressed the utmost regret at having been misled by the assertions of the drunken man they had seen, and offered any, or every apology I might choose to dictate.

Il Signor Magatti was delighted at my triumph, repeatedly reminded my two spiteful and malicious countrymen that *he* had never for a moment given the slightest confidence to the vile insinuations of the unknown person, and had urged them to observe the same course. The crest-fallen gentlemen looked very contrite, and declared they would immediately write to their correspondents, to take no further steps in the affair, as the whole had originated in error.

Encouraged by their shame and confusion, I felt my spirit increase; and, with a haughty air, I assured them that I would immediately proceed to Naples, and use my utmost endeavours to have the man in question arrested, and compel him to explain the hints he had dared to give; and I added, that I trusted, if he was arrested, that they would be ready to come forward, and prove the words he had used. This they promised to do; and I left them, coldly accepting their reiterated excuses and regrets.

"Give me your hand, Signor Herbert," said Signor Magatti. "You have behaved like a man, and a brave man too, jealous of his honour and reputation. It did my heart good to hear you rate those gentlemen, and to observe your *fiercé* while you did so. They were made heartily ashamed of themselves, and they deserved it; for between you and I, they are extremely malicious. Never does a noble traveller from your country visit Sicily, that these two do not instantly make us acquainted with some history or anecdote to his disadvantage. One is ruined by his extravagance, and is obliged to get out of the way of his creditors. *Another has lost his fortune by gambling, and another is so im-*

moral that he is glad to leave his own country, where he is too well known. In short, there is no end to the propensity to scandal of the individuals we have left; and if they are to be credited, there is not to be found in all your country an honourable man, nor a spotless woman. Such persons greatly injure their own land by propagating such reports, and I rejoice that they have been reproved by you. And yet how prone are we all to error! How given to think ill of our fellow men! I assure that I, even I, who am not disposed to misjudge, fancied that you were not over-willing to confront these gentlemen. — Yes, I misjudged you, my dear Signor Herbert, until I saw the anger that flashed in your eye, the honest indignation, and noble *fiercé* you evinced when reprimanding these men."

I was glad that I had been able to screw my courage up to the scene I had gone through, when I saw the good effect it had produced; and I took leave of Signor Magatti, leaving him impressed with a most favourable opinion of me, although the striking fact of my having drawn the two hundred pounds in gold from his house, the day in which the wretch Figgins had boasted of my having given him that sum, offered such an incontrovertible evidence against me that one would have thought it could not have been passed over. But such is the influence of money. To give so large a sum away, argued that I must be richer than was imagined, and to be rich is always in favour of a man, more especially when he who attacks his reputation is known to be poor.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

Now fully impressed with the conviction that not even his own interest could bind the odious Figgins to secrecy, and that with his habit of inebriety, he would during those hours when he was no longer master of his reason, disclose as at Palermo, his power over me, I became more than ever wretched, when I reflected on my own position. How was I to escape from the reach of this harpy, where hide myself? In what a labyrinth of misery had I involved myself, and where was I to find a clue to lead me out of it? Then came a hope that Figgins's habits of intoxication might abridge the term of his life, and he dead, I might pass the remainder of my life free from alarm! But then came the recollection of how many aged men I had seen who had all their days indulged in a similar habit to Figgins. He was probably inured to intoxication, and might live to torture me during all my days.

Oh! the misery, the despair of knowing my peace, my honour, to be in the hands of one of the most despicable miscreants on earth, without the power of securing his silence, or of ridding myself of his exactions!

Existence, held on such terms, instead of being a blessing, was a burthen, an intolerable burthen, and had not the Almighty forbidden self-murder, I would have laid down the load. Of one change in myself, I had cause to be thankful, and I was so, deeply, humbly, thankful; for I now felt that, to free myself for ever from the power of the vile Figgins, I would not, could the mere movement of a finger effect it, occasion his death. No, as *yet I was unsullied by guilt, and though, by my own folly and madness I had increased the penalty, I would not for worlds add*

to my present wretchedness, the consciousness of crime, the weight of remorse. I remembered when at Nice, the desperate thought of destroying Figgins had crossed my mind, and I thanked God, that now, whatever my sufferings might be, such a thought returned to me no more.

I sailed from Palermo the next evening, my plans for the future totally unsettled, and haunted by the dread, that as my persecutor had traced me thence, notwithstanding the *ruse* I had put in practice to deceive him when I quitted Nice, so would he be able to discover my retreat, wherever I might direct my steps. Oh! could I but lay open my position to the Signor Bertucci — he, such a sensible, as well as such a kind man, and who had evinced such a warm interest for me and my child. But how convince him that I was *really* guiltless, when I had nothing but my own assertions to offer in proof. The whole affair must appear so strange, so improbable, as to be almost incomprehensible. No; I could not bring myself to relate what must excite his incredulity; I could not encounter his altered countenance, when I had revealed my secret. I must submit to the fate that awaited me, a fate brought on by my own folly, but not the less bitter for that.

Arrived at Naples, I called on my only friend there, the Signor Bertucci. He was surprised, but pleased to see me again; had many new subjects of interest to talk to me about in the recently discovered buildings and antique bronzes of Pompeii. The glass found there also, refuting some learned hypothesis, relative to the ancients not having applied glass in their windows, lately published by an erudite abbate, afforded him an opportunity of revealing some of the vast antiquarian lore, in which he was so well versed; and, as I listened to his reflections, I almost envied the calmness of mind, that permitted such researches, and enabled him to be so eloquent on them. I told him of my desire to visit Paestum, and to explore the beautiful country between

Naples and Salerno. He expressed his regret that he could not accompany me, and advised my leaving my child and her nurse under his protection, during my absence, alleging that the accommodation to be found on the road, was not suited to a little creature, brought up so luxuriously. I did not wish to impose so much trouble on him, and knowing that the kind hostess of the Victoria would herself attend to the comfort of my daughter, I determined to leave her at the hotel, for the few days I should be absent, the Signor Bertucci promising to call and see her every day.

I longed to be alone: to ramble at will through a picturesque and beautiful country I had never previously explored. I fancied it might prove a diversion from the painful thoughts that haunted me, forgetting that sorrow and memory accompany the wretched wherever they go. I took leave of my daughter, — merely telling her nurse and my male attendant that I should be absent a week, but not stating whither I was going, — and two days after my return to Naples, proceeded to Castelmare, *en route* for Salerno.

Never had a fairer day been granted in Italian climes. The sky, blue and bright, was reflected on the sea, with a tint as rich as ever the purest sapphire gave forth; and, as the sunbeams fell on the sparkling water, millions of brilliants seemed to glitter on its translucent breast. The dark azure of the mountains, brought near by the light and transparent atmosphere, bounded the horizon on my left, while the rippling waves broke in circling eddies on the shore, at my right, with a soft and monotonous sound, most soothing to the senses. Myriads of pearls, formed by the foam of the broken wavelets, floated and glittered on the sand, like broken hopes, dispersing almost as soon as formed, and wafted away with the revolving tide.

Could I behold, unmoved, the enchanting views that presented themselves before me? There lay Capri, like a precious *gem set in the sea*; the sunshine playing on it, and bringing out

its varied hues; and to my left, stood Vesuvius, in grim repose, yet with something menacing, too, in its aspect, — something, reminding one, that it might again overwhelm the smiling scene around, and spread desolation, where industry had almost effaced the traces of its former ravages.

Vesuvius was to the glowing picture, what the sight of a cemetery is in a beautiful landscape. It reminded one of the instability of what we are enjoying, and I turned from it as chastened, as a man in high spirits rushing from a scene of brilliant pleasure feels, on encountering a funeral procession of some young and fair victim to ruthless Death. Having left Castelmare with its dark green foliage, its olive woods, and vineyards, crowned by cliffs and isolated towers, I proceeded to La Cava, through a country full of the most picturesque and romantic scenery. Here a rustic bridge spanned a broad and sparkling stream, that jumped and gambolled over broken rocks and shining gravel, while perched on high, stood wild rocks intermingled with grotesque-shaped trees, presenting just such scenes as the pencil of Salvator Rosa loved to paint. We recognize his pictures at every turn of the road, and are reminded of his having often wandered through the spots we are now exploring.

The white towers erected for pigeons along the left of the road, with the blue sky for background, and the flocks of these birds winging their course from tower to tower, gave great animation to the scene, and the picturesque costumes of the peasants encountered, added to the beauty. All that I had heard of the country between Castelmare and Salerno fell short of the truth. It was beautiful beyond the powers of description, and as I paused to admire it, the thought of her who was sleeping in her distant grave, of her, whose heart would have been filled with delight when gazing on such scenery, brought tears to my eyes. Every thing that touched my heart, whether in Nature, or Art, *awakened my regret for my lost Louisa.* It was as if every noble

and tender sentiment were so closely associated with her memory in my heart, that never more could they be separated. Even when I prayed to the Deity, her pure spirit floated in my thoughts as an angel interceding for me at the from sin, looking down from its own beatitude on the Throne of Mercy, as a pitying soul redeemed unhappy being she had loved so well. She was with me in thought, through the whole of this journey. Alone, with no curious or indifferent eye to mark my emotion, I abandoned my whole soul to the tender melancholy that stole over me, as I thought of her. Again her low sweet voice seemed to sound in my ear, her pensive, dark, and loving eyes met my glance, though I was passing through scenes where she had never been, and where consequently it might be supposed they could awaken no memories of her. But all that was beautiful, all that appealed to my heart, evoked the recollection of her whose image was buried in it, and though I travelled in search of recreation from care, my love and sorrow accompanied me.

I stopped a day at Salerno, so rich in associations of the middle ages, but I took little interest in its sights, and the mouldering folios shown me. The blue sky, and bluer sea, the distant sunlit mountains fading into the most delicate hues, and the luxuriant vine branches trailed from tree to tree, had more attraction for me than the objects to which strangers are led by the self-elected ciceroni of the town. I, however, suffered myself to be conducted to the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, once the temple of Vesta, and saw the antique Sarcophagi now converted into a Mausoleum for the modern dead, but I little heeded the erudite histories of the place and its treasures, recounted to me in a doubly nasal tone by the cicerone, and gladly returned to the sea-shore, where, having engaged a boat, I was rowed some distance on the bay, whence Salerno with its tower-crowned cliffs had a striking effect. I returned to the Alberga for a late dinner, and again wandered forth to the shore. It was the eve

Maria time, and as the sound of the hymn was borne to me by the evening breeze, a deep religious feeling filled my soul. I felt, that in a strange land, far from all I knew, amidst a people who were not even acquainted with my name or country, the same Almighty God worshipped in my own land was here adored, and no place could be strange to me, where at the same hour, earnest hearts offered up the incense of prayer to Him. Oh! blessed tie of brotherhood, why should a difference in the forms of worship ever separate human hearts? The hymn borne to me on the breeze, was addressed to the mother of God, but that did not prevent *my* soul from ascending in prayer to *Him*, nor did I condemn those who offer their vows to that most pure and blessed of women, who was chosen to be his mother, though theirs was not my faith. To me, worship to the divinity, when sincere, in every form is sacred, and I pity the hard of heart, who can condemn the followers of any religion, which they believe to be true, and hug themselves in the selfish belief that those only of one creed can be saved. Who dares put a limit to the pity and mercy of God, towards his erring and ignorant creatures?

I left Salerno for Paestum early next morning, refusing to take an escort, as was advised by the innkeeper. I was told of persons robbed, and in one instance murdered, through want of this precaution. But what had I to dread? The loss of the small sum I carried with me, could only occasion a temporary inconvenience, and my carriage and dress indicated so little of patrician wealth, that much could not be expected in the way of ransom for me. I would offer no resistance, if assailed, and consequently dreaded no ill usage. The landlord shook his head, and said the English were always self-willed, and hoped I might not suffer for it as a poor young couple from my country had done, who, while yet in all the elysium of the honey-moon, had met their deaths returning from Paestum, by the hands of some brigands who attacked them. The driver, he added, could tell



me all about it, for he drove the hapless pair that very day, and had been severely beaten. I questioned the man as we journeyed along, and he related the story to me.

“A fairer couple, Signor, I never saw. They were young, rich, I believe, — generous / found them, the husband handsome and manly, the wife, so youthful, as to be almost still a child. She was fair as the finest pictures of the Madonna. Her cheeks like two roses, her eyes blue as the sky, her hair rich as our vine branches, and borne by every breeze like their tendrils. They were like two happy children escaped from school, joyous in their liberty. They used to turn from looking at the heavens, and the blue sea, and gaze into each other’s eyes, as if every thing they saw together made them dearer to each other. And she would lean her small hand on his shoulder, and he would encircle her delicate waist with his arm. And sometimes they used to sing to the Signor, such beautiful duets. One might easily know how well they loved, by the way their voices kept time together. It seemed as if the two came from the same breast; I warrant me, this road never before, nor since, heard such voices. They reminded me of birds, now rising high into the air, and then sinking down, as if they brought back a little patch of the blue heavens with them, so clear, so beautiful did they die away. Every one noticed their love. The men and women at the Albergo, who waited on them at their repasts, spoke of it. They said they were always gazing at each other, and when they passed before the mirror, they never looked in it, but turned to look at each other. — Now said Annunciata — and Annunciata, Signor, is a clever girl, when a woman prefers looking at her lover’s face, to seeing her own in a mirror, it is a sign of the greatest affection. They are too happy, said Annunciata, such happiness never lasts long. Poor young creatures, how will they *bear to live, if either, should cease to love. Providence looks jealously on such bliss on earth, for when it is so great, what*

greater can be reserved up there, Signor?" and he pointed to the sky.

"Well, Signor, I took them to Paestum, and they were pleased. Every thing, in truth, pleased them, they were so happy. And they made sketches of the temples, and each said the drawing of the other was most like, and they showed them to me; and though I could not really see which was the most perfect, both were so very like, the Signora pressed me so much to say that, seeing what would most please her, I said the Signor's drawing was the most like. And she clapped her small hands for joy, and gave me a piastre, while he said I was quite wrong, for hers was a much finer drawing. They say, Signor, that we don't like to see happiness in other person's eyes; that we like to see it only in our own. But I assure you, I had grown so fond of this young pair, that it gave me pleasure to see their great happiness. And yet, I never saw them kiss. Annunciata wouldn't believe me when I told her. And once, when the Maistro was raising her hand to his lips, before me, her cheeks grew redder than any rose, and she drew away her hand, and he seemed to understand that it was not pleasing to her, in my presence, and then she thanked me with such a look as I never saw before—never shall see again. No, Signor, with all their love, they were as modest and innocent, as two *bambinos* at play. One felt that they were pure in heart.

"What a bright day it still was when we turned our backs on Paestum. Often did they stand up, to look back on it, until we had got too far away to see it. I was advancing at a quick pace, when all of a sudden I heard a shrill whistle, and saw heads pop up from behind a hedge, and guns aimed at the carriage, while loud voices called on me to stop. I determined to put the horses into a gallop, and began whipping them, but the Signora cried out to me to stop, and in accents that went to my very soul, implored her husband to make no resistance. He had arms in the

carriage, and was well disposed to use them, but there was such agony in her entreaties that he yielded to them. The brigands came up and demanded money.

"Give them, oh! give them," said the Signora.

"The gentleman looked angry, and I am sure was thinking how easily — for he was as strong as well as a brave man — he could drive them away, when, they more angrily demanding the money, he stooped down to take the sack that contained it from the bottom of the carriage, when one of the brigands, thinking he was looking for his pistols to shoot them, aimed his gun at him. The Signora saw him take aim, and quick as lightning threw herself between her husband and the brigand to save the former, when — oh! unhappy day — the gun was fired, and the same shot pierced both bodies! Never, never, shall I forget that moment. Both fell back mortally wounded, and I, Signor, maddened at the sight, reproached the murderer with such bitter violence, that he was only prevented murdering me also by the other brigands, who disarmed him, but not until he had terribly beaten me with the butt end of his gun. The brigands, having rifled the carriage, fled, and I, mounted on one of the horses, galloped off for aid to the next house. To this the poor Signor was borne, while the Signora was taken back to the wretched hostelry at Paestum, there being no more room at the house to which the husband had been taken. They were insensible when they were separated, but I, Signor, my heart bled at the notion that even in death they should be parted. He died in a few minutes; *she* lived two days, believing all the time that *he* was recovering, and would soon be brought to her, and that *she* herself was in no danger. She spoke of her husband continually, raved of him in all her delirium, and died, Signor, talking of the unutterable happiness she experienced at being again reunited to him.

"Yes, Signor, Annunciata was right. They were too happy

to live, but it was a pity that they who could not bear to be asunder a moment, should not have died together, though perhaps it was all through the mercy of God; for as the Signora lived two days after her husband, it would have been too cruel for her to know he was gone from earth before her."

This simple narrative powerfully affected me, and the changes of countenance, and voice, as well as the tears of the narrator, proved his sorrow. "Yes, better," thought I, "was it that they died while yet their happiness had known no cloud, their garland of life had not faded, nor lost a single flower. Theirs, if short, was a blissful existence, loving and beloved. What could life yield that they had not already enjoyed. Their cup of happiness was full to the very brim, and not a single lee of the dregs, had yet floated to their lips." But then came the thought, that had they lived to bless, and be blessed by a child, to feel that most pure, and unselfish of all love, that of a parent to a child, which looks beyond the grave to the happiness of its object, might not their felicity in life have known increase. My heart swelled with tenderness, for my own child seemed to rise up before me; and as I thought how bitter the pang of leaving her alone on earth, while yet in the helplessness of childhood, would be, I admitted that it was a mercy accorded to the youthful pair, whose fate had excited such sympathy in my breast, that they were spared this pang. I dwelt on the youthful wife in all her charms, which must have been great to have made so profound an impression on the simple man, who so fondly remembered the happy pair. I felt sure she must have resembled my lost Louisa. But, far happier in a husband, she had experienced no trials like those to which one terrible event in my life had subjected my poor Louisa. She had not met with moodiness and abstraction, where *she* had garnered up *her* heart; *her* days had been all sunlit, and when the night, the night of existence came, she slept in the *same grave with her husband.*

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## CHAPTER XLVII.

THERE was something in the desolation of Paestum, analogous to the state of my feelings. There stood the work of man in ruins, while the mountains, the sea, and the hills, the work of God, remained unchanged. — A cloudless sky, and a dazzling sunshine seemed to mock the time-touched temples, once the boast of other centuries, and still magnificent in their decay. — There was not a fissure in them that was not distinctly revealed by the bright light shed on each and all.

The stateliness, the fine proportions of these works of antiquity, standing boldly out against a sky as darkly blue as the purest ultramarine, had a most imposing effort. They sobered, they awed my feelings — how puerile seemed the wreck of man's fleeting, transitory happiness, while contemplating these grand wrecks of ages.

These monuments of a by-gone race, whose works have so long outlived even the names of the architects and founders, as to give rise to various apocryphal hypotheses concerning their history. A miserable building used as a wine-shop for the postillions who drive travellers to Paestum, and as a stable for their horses, stands at a little distance from the temple, and two or three reed huts erected as a shelter for shepherds, form a striking contrast to the temple of Neptune.

A swarthy shepherd clothed in sheep-skin, his bronzed legs bare, and sandalled feet, reminding one of a statue, or a squalid looking mendicant, attracted from his wretched hovel by the sight of a carriage, might be seen hovering around to entreat charity. *I walked from the temple of Neptune to that of Ceres, through*

long grass, interspersed with wild plants and bushes, growing in rank luxuriance, but not one of the roses, for which Paestum was once so famed, met my view.

I sat down on a broken column to contemplate the scene. Its desolation, instead of irritating my morbid feelings, soothed them. — Life seemed a dream, a feverish dream, soon passed, and its griefs, fleeting like our days, scarcely worth a thought, when the brevity of our existence is brought before us by the sight of objects like the temples I was gazing on, and which countless generations have, like me, looked on, and passed away like shadows, leaving no trace behind.

I arose, and proceeded to the fragments of the walls and gates of the once proud city. No solemn procession, no joyous crowd, no busy population now passed through them. No hum of voices, no sound of chariot-wheels were heard; the wind slept, for not a breath of air moved the branches of the cactuses or aloes growing amid the fragments of sculpture strewn around. I felt that could I have obtained cleanly accommodation, however plain and simple, I should have liked to prolong my stay at Paestum, but the hostellerie was too filthy to be thought of, and after having waited until the setting sun cast a roseate hue on the temples, and made the hills to wear a rich lilac tint, I was warned by my postillon that it was time to depart.

"The Signor," said he, "is not like some Inglese, who came here early this morning, and who having walked through the temples, betook themselves to the cabaret, where they have ever since been carousing over the provisions and wine they brought with them from Salerno, and smoking and singing. They say the temples are not worth looking at. Yes, Signor, I heard them myself, for I understand English, having served an English merchant some time, at Naples — *Giovani*, who keeps the inn, says they have done nothing but abuse the place, and drink until they scarcely retain the power of moving."

I heard the voices of this "rabble rout" as I entered the carriage, singing obscene songs, interrupted by hiccups and oaths, and rejoiced not to have met the individuals themselves, whose presence would have greatly impaired the pleasure, melancholy though it was, which the contemplation of Paestum had afforded me. Leonardi, for so my postillion was called, beguiled the tediousness of the journey from Paestum to Salerno by singing. He sang of the shepherd who leaves his humble home, and fond wife and children, to guide his flock to some distant pasture, where for months he is to be separated from those dear to him, and dwell in his comfortless and solitary exile, with no companions but his sheep and dog. His sole consolation is that the sun which shines over *his* head, brightens also the home of his beloved ones, and the stars, the bright eyes of night, which look down on him while he prays ere he sinks in slumber, meet the glance also of his poor wife; thus by the blessed sun by day, and blessed stars by night, he feels not wholly separated from his dear ones, and it will be sweet when he rejoins them, to tell his wife as they together gaze on the golden sun, and silvery stars, how often they spoke to him of her.

Then he sang of the lover stealing at night to the lattice of his beloved, and awaking her from her slumbers by his song. He tells her that while she sleeps he is near, and hopes that in her dreams, she may show less severity to him than when she is awake. He blames the harshness of her parents, who will not let their daughter wed one who is poor in all but love, and paints that love is better than gold to make a wife happy.

The voice of Leonardi was not unmusical, and he sang with considerable feeling, while I leaned back in the carriage in a dreamy reverie, glad to be withdrawn from my own sad thoughts by those vague and more pleasing ones suggested by his simple songs. *Pleased at the commendations I occasionally bestowed on his voice, he ceased not to sing until we arrived at Salerno,*

and I believe the silver I gave him, was less gratifying to the kind-hearted fellow than my approbation of his songs.

The fumes of sundry savoury preparations issued from the kitchen of the Alberga as I entered.

“It is the supper of some Milordi Inglese, who are expected,” said the host in an apologetic tone, on seeing that I turned from the strong odour of oil, onions, and cheese, with distaste. “They are brave milordis, pay like princes, and drink *Corpo de Baco* — like Bacchus himself. They took all the provisions in my house with them this morning to Paestum, and as much wine as would have served eight Italians, though they were but three Inglese; and they ordered the best supper and wine Salerno can produce, to be ready for their return.”

Fatigued by my journey, and desirous to seek my pillow, I despatched my repast, the frugality of which, and the diluted wine with which I washed it down, must have given my host but a mean opinion of me. I certainly could not pass for a Milordi Inglese with him, as profusion, and gross habits, are what Italian innkeepers, in remote districts, consider the peculiar characteristics of the class they so designate. I sought my bedroom, and found, to my annoyance, that it communicated by a door with a rude sort of *sal à manger*, in which a table was ready laid for supper for three persons. I instantly conjectured that it was intended for the riotous trio, who I left deep in their Bacchanalian orgies at Paestum, and anxious to avoid such a vicinity, I descended to the landlord, and endeavoured to make him give me the chamber I had occupied the previous night, or any other more remote from that to be occupied by the expected guests. But I argued in vain. Every other room was filled, and my late chamber was now in the possession of two ladies, and he had no other.

*I had not long enjoyed the slumber induced by fatigue.*



when I was awoke by loud voices, and reiterated demands for supper.

"More wine, bring more wine," cried a voice that seemed familiar to my ear.

"Are you afraid of not being paid?" vociferated the same person; and I heard the chink of a well-filled purse, shook, I concluded, to display the owner's wealth.

"Ay, ay," said another speaker, "he need not be afraid of your not paying. You're the prince of paymasters, as well as of good fellows, and the very one to give these d—m—d Hitalians a right notion of the English."

"Why yes, I flatter myself I'm rather a good specimen of my country. I like an idle life, and love to live on the fat of the land wherever I may be."

"Ay, my hearty, and you are right too. A short life and a merry one, say I. But after all, this here country is but a poor affair for a man with plenty of the ready rhino, to enable him to throw away his time in. The Hitalians are a set of spooneys. Know nothink of sport, and what's a country without sport, I should like to know."

"You are right, Motcombe. No man of spirit can henjoy life where there is no sport, and for my part, if I could find myself back in hold Hengland again, I'd never wish to stir hout of it."

"I say, Bradstock, why did you leave that there Lord Ardingfield? They say he's as rich as a Jew."

"Ay, and as fond of his money, too. Why, to tell you the truth, it wasn't much of a place after all. *He would* pay his own bills; and when a man does that, what can his valet make by him? Then he made a fuss when any of his things disappeared, and things *will* disappear when noblemen are travelling, *going from hinn to hinn*; you take don't you?"

"*Yes; and so did you, too,...* I suspect, Master Bradstock;

hah, hah, hah." And this attempt at repartee occasioned a general hilarity.

"Not much, I can assure you; for I saw very soon *he* was not precisely a sort of chap as would stand my *taking* ways."

"But it wasn't wise to throw up the place, and so far from home, too; you have heard the wise old saw, 'never throw out dirty water 'till you have got clean,' and a devilish good advice too."

"But if a place throws *you* up, or that you see its coming close to that point, who wouldn't take the hinitiative, and *give* warning instead of waiting to *get* it?"

"Then there is the advantage of being able to say when one hoffers for another place, 'I left hat my own haccord; I was not sent away.' Eh, Bradstock?"

"Certainly, Motcombe. It makes hall the difference."

"What infernal hinns these here Hitalian ones are! Here have I been ringing this here bell for the last twenty minutes, for supper, without being hable to get hany one to hanswer. Yes, Hengland is the only place to live in. But here comes supper at last. I hordered that no maccaroni should be sent hup. I can't abide the sight of it. Maccaroni looks to me for all the world like boiled pipes for tobacco. Would you believe it, when I told 'em to give us a good hot devil, they stood as if I really wanted the hold gentleman himself, and the cook began crossing himself. Come, gentlemen, let us set too. I see we have devilled cutlets, devilled chickens, and devilled beef-steaks; after which the marsela may pass hoff as sherry."

The repast was done ample justice to, as far as I could judge by the clatter of the knives and forks, and the comparative silence, interrupted only by half distinct exclamations, from mouths too much filled to articulate plainly, and invitations to drink wine.

"What a regular humbug that there Paestum is," said Mr. Marmaduke Herbert. II.

Figgins, for by this time I ascertained that the voice familiar to my ear, was no other than his, and though I trembled at his proximity, I listened attentively to the ribald jests going on between him and his companions, in the hope of hearing his plans for the future, when wine had rendered him unguarded and communicative.

"Yes," resumed he, "it may well be called Paestum, for it 's a regular pest, and nuisance too."

"Bravo, bravo," reiterated his guests. "A capital hit."

"To come hall the way from Naples to see two hold tumble-down temples, that 's not worth turning one's head to look at."

"You're quite right, Figgins; but—"

"Now, didn't I tell you, Bradstock, never to call me Figgins again? It 's a d-m-n-d low name, and I can't habide it."

"Pardonnez-moy, as the French say," replied Mr. Bradstock, "but it an hoblee."

"A what?"

"An hoblee, as the French call it. I was going to say that its the nobility and gentry that 's to blame, for sending so many people to see sich places as Paestum. They purtends, for it can be nothink in the world but purtence, that they find 'em charming, or as they say, very hinteresting. I 'm sure I 've heard that there silly chap, Lord Hardingfield, rave about 'em to his friends, has if they were the finest buildings in the world. And what are they to the Temple in London, I should like to know, where you may see the steamers running hup and down the Thames, hevery ten minutes, while you are walking in a garden filled with flowers? And to think of the lyes of people! Hang me, if I haven't heard that chap, Hardingfield, talk scores of times of the roses of Paestum, and I'll be sworn there isn't a rose in the whole place, for I looked all around to find one."

"Talk of *our* lying," observed Mr. Motcombe; "why, hang *me*, if the *hupper class*, as they call themselves, dont lye ten

times more. Lord, love ye, I 've heard some on 'em tell such thumpers, when I 've been awaiting at table, as made me wonder how they had the face to do it. Why, would you believe it, I 've heard one 'em say that the hearth, yes, the hearth we live on, moved around the sun."

"No, damn me, that 's too much, Motcombe, you made that yourself. There 's no man in the world would have the himpudence to tell even a hidiot that the firm earth, with all the thousands and thousands of mountains, rocks, castles, palaces, and cities on it, could move up into the clouds to march round the sun! What would become of the buildings, ay, and of the people too? Why, they'd be capsized, and dashed to pieces, and who would there be left to tell the story?"

"Don't himagine I was such a flat as to believe such a himbrobable lye," answered Mr. Motcombe; "I honly mentioned it to show how lords and gentlemen can lye when they set about it."

"Lord, that 's nothing," said Mr. Bradstock. "I 've heard many things quite as himprobable. What do you think of my hearing one on them there chaps of lords talk of there being mountains in the moon, and the marks of a volcanor, I think he called it, visible through a tell-his-cope."

"And I," observed Figgins, "once heard one on 'em say that the moon shines with a borrowed light."

"Come, come, that 's a good un," remarked Mr. Motcombe. "I 'd like to know who 's the lender?"

"The chap said it was the sun, and they were all such d-m-n-d flats, that not one of 'em seemed to doubt it. In fact, they all of 'em took these lyes, as if they were hestablished truths that no one questioned."

"And to think such spooneys, such snobs, should be masters of thousands, owners of fine castles and palaces, while we, who have ten times more sense should be hoblged to wait on 'em. *'T is too bad, ain't it?'*"

“But all the world knows their folly; for don't every one of whom they buy take 'em in, in a manner that none but fools would submit to; and when we had per cent. to what we buy for them, have they the sense to discover it, tho' the greatest fool among our class would see it in a jiffy?”

Here, overcome by weariness, I dropped asleep, and so lost much of their discourse.

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## CHAPTER XLVIII.

I suppose I could not have slept long, when I was awoken by a loud chorus, singing, or rather screaming, a bacchanalian song. For a few minutes I could not remember where I was, or what all this clamour could mean; but when recollection came, I shrunk with disgust at the odious vicinity of the noisy revellers, and from the fumes of tobacco which impregnated my room. The song over, I heard one of these ruffians ask Figgins what he intended to do with his money.

"Why not set up a cock-pit at Naples, and bring over fighting-cocks from England?" said the speaker.

"A devilish good speculation," observed Motcombe. "It would be sure to be well supported by the Henglish who come to Naples, and there 's always a plenty on 'em, and it would give these spooney Hitalians a notion of sport."

"And suppose you brought out some good bull-dogs, and made 'em fight once or twice a week? You could get good subscriptions for entrance to see the sport, and turn a handsome sum by betting."

"It 's a low trade, and I hates what 's low. I 'd much rather live like a gentleman. Do nothing, but go about from place to place amusing myself," replied Figgins.

"That 's very well, but have you money enough to keep up always an idle life? for be assured, my good fellow, after one has been living like a gentleman for some time, it seems harder than ever to be obliged to go to work again. I know it by experience."

"*But I have got a bank that will never fail,*" answered

Figgins. "When my money is gone I know where to get more."

"You're a lucky fellow, my boy, that's all; and I wish you'd put me in the way of making gold also."

"And me," observed Motcombe. "God knows, I want money badly enough. Just give us a hint how you have managed to have your purse always well filled, though you open its strings so freely, live like a fighting-cock, and treat your friends like a prince?"

"Why, because I've my wits about me. If I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth, and I know full well I wasn't, I've made myself one. Poverty, it is said, sharpens the wits, and I believe it. Mine ought to be sharp enough, for no one knows better what it is to want a dinner. I was always thinking how I could gain enough to become independent of service, and at last I hit on the means."

"There's a good fellow, let us into the secret?"

"No, no! Every man for himself. My wits have worked me a mine. Set yours to work also, my fine fellows, and see what you'll make of 'em. I asked no one's advice how to make my fortune, and I'll tell no one where mine lies."

I trembled like a guilty wretch while his companions were questioning Figgins. I dreaded every moment that he would, now that he was under the influence of the wine he had drank, disclose my secret, or at least furnish a clue to it, and the weight of a mountain seemed removed from my breast when I found he was not disposed to satisfy their curiosity.

"Come, let us have some brandy?" said Bradstock.

"This here wine is poor washy stuff," observed Motcombe, "for all the Hitalians praise it. It is made in Sicily, is it not?"

"Talking of Sicily," interrupted Bradstock, "you were there lately for a short time, Figgins, were you not?"

"And what if I were," replied Figgins angrily. "What is that to you? Ain't I at liberty to go where I like? And once for all, I tell you Bradstock, I don't like being called Figgins, and I *won't* be called so. I told you that I will answer to no name but Howard. That's an aristocratic one, and sounds well. It belongs to one of the noblest families in Hengland, and has such a genteel air with it."

"Well, my good fellow, I meant no offence, but when a man has known another so many years by one name, he is apt to call him by it."

"As for offence," observed Figgins, "I hallow no man to offend me, for hif he does I turn my back on him, and stand no more treats."

"Well, my dear Howard, 'pon my honour it was only a slip of the tongue. Why, do you think I'd say anything to vex you, after being friends for the last ten years? I remember well we struck up our friendship when you were in that scrape about the jewels that were stolen, and which I helped you to dispose of."

"And about which the poor waiting-maid was transported," observed Motcombe.

"If you think I'm to be frightened by your ripping up old by-gones, you're mistaken, gentlemen, I can tell you," said Figgins, his voice indicating suppressed rage. "Many a guinea I've given you both, when I could ill afford it, to induce you to hold your tongues about that awkward business. But that was when I was a servant and depended on my character for bread. Now, the case is different. I know where to get money whenever I want it, and all you could both say and swear, can't stop the bank I draw on."

"Don't be too sure of that, Mr. Howard."

"No, don't reckon too much on that," said Bradstock.

"What, do ye mean to threaten me, after all I have done for ye?" demanded Figgins, in a rage.

"*Done for us,*" repeated Bradstock; "what have you done



that you should reproach us in this vulgar way? Lent us a few pounds occasionally, and invited us to dinner, or to make an excursion, because you wanted our society, being tired of your own."

"I advise you, now that you intend to set up for a gentleman, to learn to behave as sich," observed Motcombe. "Whoever heard a gentleman reproach another with having lent him a few pounds, or with having given him a few dinners?"

"Hold your tongues, and don't tell me how gentlemen behave; I know all that much better than you do. But when two fellows, filled with good food and wine, which hasn't cost 'em a stiver, begin to open old sores that ought never to be touched again, they must expect that a man will speak his mind. I don't want to quarrel with you, if you don't provoke me into it. So, let us have some brandy, shake hands, and forgive and forget."

"Yes, yes, forgive and forget," echoed both the men. "It's foolish for old friends to quarrel."

"I'll go down stairs, and see if I can't make the master of this house fork out some Rosolio," said Figgins. "It's rare stuff, made in Sicily, where I drank plenty of it." And I heard him staggering out of the room.

"He's a regular cocktail," observed Bradstock, "and deserves a sound thrashing."

"And should get it too," said Motcombe; "only that were we to give it him, it would stop the supplies in future; and one never knows when one may want them. My motto is, that 'It's better to *use* than *abuse* a friend.'"

"D-m-n such false friends, say I," replied Bradstock. "But we must find out how he comes by all this money of late. We may be able to turn it to account."

"I suspect he went to Palermo for money," observed Motcombe; "for I know he lost a round sum playing at blind hookey with some chaps at Naples, and was short of cash the day before

he went away. He stopped only a very short time, and returned with his pockets full of money."

"There's some mystery in all this, and I hoped we'd have got it out of him when he was tipsy; but he's such a fox, even when in liquor, that he's too deep for us."

"I say, do you know how much he has about him?"

"Not exactly, but I should think a handsome sum."

"Suppose we were to rob him when he's asleep. In an inn like this the robbery could be put on some one else; and he's too much in our power to prosecute us, even if he knew us to be the thieves."

"A good thought; and we'll share the money."

"Certainly. You sleep in the same room with him. When you hear him snoring, take his purse, and hand it to me. I'll be waiting outside the door for it. You had better hand me his watch, and yours too, for it must appear as if *you* also were robbed."

"But we may be searched, and where will you hide the money and watches?"

"I'll take care of that, so don't be uneasy. I hear him coming up; — is it agreed on?"

"Yes; here's my hand on it, and mind you are outside the door to receive the stolen goods."

"I'll be there—mum! — not a word more — for there he is."

"I told you I'd get you some Rosolio," hiccuped Figgins, "and here it is. I've tasted it, and I can tell you, it's the genuine article, neat as imported, as they say in our country. This here spooney made great difficulties in letting me have it. Fancy what a flat he must be to refuse giving liquor to a man who can pay for it! You'd not catch an Englishman doing that, would you? The fool said he was afraid we'd kill ourselves with so much drink, and that he'd be blamed for supplying it."

*I heard the host now speak. He requested them to go to bed.*

and drink no more: warned them that they would severely suffer in their healths, from such terrible excess, and that the character of his house would be endangered by it. They understood enough of Italian, to make out that the host wanted to prevent them from drinking any more, and began calling him abusive names.

"They had not," they said, "egg-shell heads, like Italians, who could only drink sour lemonade or as sour wine of their own making. No; *they* were men with sound pates."

The host retired; shaking his head, turning up his eyes, and invoking half the saints in the calendar to bear witness, that *he* had warned these drunkards, and that it was not *his* fault, if evil came of their excesses. The Rosolio was highly praised; and, if I might judge by the noise of the glasses, done ample justice to. The voice and accents of Figgins became so thick, as to be almost unintelligible; and he complained that he did not know what had come to him, but he believed he saw double.

"For — only — just — now," said he, bringing out his words with an effort, and with a pause between each: "I'll be hanged if I didn't think I saw you two fellows filling my glass twice oftener than your own — a thing that I know to be impossible — for you are both too fond of good liquor to let me have a double share."

I heard the host called; heard the three men stagger out of the room to their sleeping apartments; and disgusted and horrified beyond measure, by the scene to which I had been a listener, I was so troubled, that I hardly knew what step I had best take. After a few minutes' reflection, it occurred to me, that it would be highly culpable to let the innocent host, or the character of his house suffer, by allowing the intended robbery to take place. And yet, how prevent it without involving myself with the miscreants who had planned it, and making my vicinity known to the ruffian I so much wished to avoid? At length, I resolved to steal

down stairs, and tell the landlord that to prevent danger to his house, in case of Figgins having a fit, he being the most drunk, it would be wise for him, and one of his men, to have a pallet placed in the passage, outside the door of Figgins's chamber, so that if he were seized with illness, assistance could be promptly afforded him.

"Ah! Signor, I feared something serious would come of all this drinking. These three men, brutes they should rather be called, drank at supper and after, no less than eight bottles of Marsala, the strongest wine we have, Signor; and he, who ordered every thing, came down himself, and insisted, in spite of all my remonstrances, on having three bottles of Rosolio taken up to his friends."

"Go up at once, and take your place at the door of the drunken man's room. It is the only way to prevent danger to you," said I. And the host, impressed by my manner, of the urgency of the case, immediately followed my advice, and thus prevented the intended robbery.

I left Salerno early next morning, long before these base men had awoke from their slumbers. The landlord descended to receive the amount of my bill; but he had taken the wise precaution of leaving his man at the same spot where both had passed the night.

"I never closed my eyes for a moment, Signor," said he; "and in the night one of these persons came from his bedroom towards that where his two companions slept, but, seeing us, went away; and the other got up two or three times, and opened the bedroom door, softly — looked out — and told us we need not remain, for that his companion was quietly sleeping off the effects of the wine he had drank. Indeed, we could hear him snoring loudly, but I would not leave my post."

*I felt relieved when I had quitted the albergo, and breathed*

the fresh air; the atmosphere of the inn, charged with the mingled odours of the libations and tobacco consumed by the knaves, caused me to experience head-ache and sickness, and created a disgust, which their moral turpitude served well to encrease in my mind.

"What wretches to be let loose on society," thought I; "of what are they not capable! With such associates how soon might I not expect another demand from the vile Figgins! And was this system of exaction and plunder to go on for ever? Was I to be always the prey of a ruffian, dead to every feeling, who lavished on his infamous companions the money wrung from me? Was the patrimony of my child to be thus squandered until exhausted; and when no more remained to buy the silence of Figgins, might not the exposure and disgrace to avoid which I had sacrificed it, fall on me, and stain the name of my daughter?"

Such were the bitter reflections that filled my mind as I retraced my steps to Naples, to rejoin my child.

I determined to remove her to Sorento, for at least a few weeks, and then decide where I had best go in order to avoid the pursuit of Figgins. With what different feelings did I repossess the same route, which only three days previously had afforded me so much pleasure as almost to banish, for the time being, the recollection of the wretch who rendered my life so miserable. Now the beautiful scenery was scarcely noticed, or, if looked at, the hated image of my tormentor presented itself, and destroyed every picture. There were moments — and I shudder as I recall them — that the hope occurred that this vile man might, sooner, or later, meet his death at the hands of his infamous companions, or from the effects of the orgies in which they encouraged him; and that thus I should be released from his power. But better thoughts arose, and I felt it would be a heinous sin to desire the death of one so steeped in guilt as to be indeed unfit to die.

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## CHAPTER XLIX.

I FOUND my daughter well, and, in my partial eyes, increased in beauty and intelligence. I lost not a moment, after our things could be packed, in setting out for Capua; whence I led the postillion who drove me to believe I was immediately to proceed to Rome, as soon as I had looked at the antiquities in the vicinity of the town, to be conducted to which, I demanded a cicerone at the inn. — I listened patiently to his prolix account of the ruins we were examining, in order to give time to the Neapolitan postillion to leave Capua; and seldom, I dare say, had he found any stranger devote so long a time to the task.

When I returned to the inn, I ascertained that the postillion had left for Naples; and, having ordered dinner to be got ready, that no chance should occur of my overtaking him on the road, I strolled out until it was ready. The repast proved that Capua no longer maintained its ancient renown for enervating, by its luxuries, those who stopped in it, for never was a less tempting dinner beheld; and when a very small portion of it was despatched, I, to the evident surprise of the nurse and my man-servant, ordered post-horses, and arranged that they should take us to Castelamare, where I intended to pass the night, and proceed next morning to Sorrento.

A douceur to the postillion won his assent to this measure; and, as I had calculated it would be dusk before we should pass through Naples, our doing so would not be known, and I should consequently elude the vigilance of Figgins to discover my abode. I had heard him the previous night announce to his companions *his intention of not returning to Naples for two days, and then*

coming by sea, so I felt sure I had no chance of encountering him on the road.


My plan succeeded perfectly. I arrived late at night at Castelamare, and left it early next morning for Sorrento; the exquisite beauty of the scenery of which made me rejoice that I had chosen it for a temporary *séjour*. I engaged a house by the week, in the environs, and, in a few hours, was comfortably established in it.

Those who have not seen Sorrento, and its neighbourhood, can form no notion of the beauty of the place. Orange groves in abundance surround the town, the golden fruit amidst its green boughs, shining beneath the azure sky, while the snowy flowers sent forth their fragrant odour to every breath of air. The sea bathed the town with its blue and pellucid waters, which broke on the shore with a soft and gentle murmur. White villas peeping from orange groves, intersected the surrounding country, while majestic pines and cedars lifted their dark green branches on high. — Never had I beheld aught so lovely as Sorrento, which far, infinitely far, surpassed my expectations, as well as every description I had heard, or read of it. No gloom, no sorrow, could resist the benign influence of the beautiful scenery and balmy air of this earthly paradise. Here I felt that if free from the pursuit of the wretch Figgins, I could for ever dwell, and wear away life, unsated with the charms of such an abode. Day after day I rambled in the environs; one day ascending the steep hills that encircle the town, and the next exploring the sea-girt grottes along the picturesque shore. — Or I would enter a boat, and sail on the smooth and sparkling sea for hours, pause before the house where the unfortunate Tasso came in his misery, to seek an asylum with his sister, when fortune frowned on him. In this humble abode he found the repose denied him in a palace, and his tortured heart was soothed by sisterly affection. The recollection of his fate drew me from the contemplation of my own

troubles, and I was ready to admit, that if the great and gifted poet could not escape a life of misfortune, men of the common herd, like myself, should not hope to be exempted from its heavy trials, but learn to submit to them with patience. How long was this noble poet the solitary occupant of a dreary cell! Shut out from the light of Heaven, and not permitted to breathe the fresh air — tortured almost into the insanity which his cruel persecutor wished to have it believed he was fallen! How must he, with the sensitiveness which forms one of the peculiar characteristics of poets, have felt the terrible privations and hardships to which he was condemned! And I, who could wander at will among the beautiful scenes that courted my eye, who could bask in the sunshine, or recline in the shade, as inclination prompted, had counted myself among the wretched of earth's sons, and had longed to lay down the load of life!

Before the heavy afflictions of the great and gifted, we become ashamed of having been wholly engrossed by our own, and this I experienced now. — I had so often with terror, mingled with deep humility, doubted my own sanity, that I felt a peculiar interest and sympathy in the fate of Tasso, and now, while wandering where his steps had often turned, I fancied I could identify his thoughts and feelings with my own. This going out of oneself, as it were, is a relief, for while we experience sympathy for the griefs of others, we forget our own, or at least remember them less bitterly.

I formed an acquaintance with the good pastor of Sorrento. Struck by my melancholy countenance, and deep mourning, he came to offer me all the consolation in his power, the use of his library, and occasional companionship, if acceptable to me. I was glad to avail myself of both; for his frank and gentle manners, as well as his benevolent aspect, conciliated my good will. I resumed my habit of reading, and with a book in my hand *would wander out to some secluded spot, where, stretched on*





the ground, I would for hours peruse some favourite author, occasionally laying down the volume to gaze around on the bright and beautiful views that on every side met my eyes.

My grief for the loss of my beloved Louisa, became softened down into a tender melancholy that I would not, if I could, forget. She was often present in my thoughts. Her affection was remembered with fervent gratitude, and the idea of ever replacing her was as foreign to my mind, as if triple the years I now numbered had been added to my age. Her image was enshrined in my heart, and there worshipped as is that of a saint by a devotee, who would think it little less than sacrilege to expose the object of his adoration to other eyes.

My child grew daily more like her dear mother. Not only did her features and the expression of her countenance strikingly resemble those of her parent, but the tones of her voice often made my heart thrill, so similar were they to my wife's.

My acquaintance with the good pastor had now grown into an intimacy that was not without charms for me. He was a simple and pious man, who knew little of the world except through books, and who devoted all his time to his religious duties, and to works of charity. To him, the poor of his parish never appealed in vain, either for pecuniary aid, or christian counsel. He looked on his poor neighbours as his peculiar charge, and often were their wants relieved at the expense of his own comforts. For them he had studied medicine, and kept a dispensary, attending not only to the care of souls, but also to the cure of bodies, and constantly occupied for others, he had hardly time to think of self. His was indeed a useful life, and it brought "its own exceeding great reward" in a tranquil mind, and a heart filled with charity for human kind. The erring found him ever ready to commiserate the consequences of their sins, while *pointing out and reproofing their faults*, and the good were encouraged *to persevere in goodness by his approbation*.

With Il Padre Maroni I visited the poor, learned to become acquainted with their wants, and through his hands to relieve them, and found so much simplicity and frankness, joined to kind-heartedness among them, as to wholly conquer the prejudices strangers are so prone to imbibe against the natives of all countries but their own, and which, through either indolence, or want of opportunity, they seldom take the pains to correct.

Il Padre Maroni was greatly beloved in his neighbourhood. Never did he pass the door of a peasant, that a blessing did not follow his steps. The very children lisped his name with pleasure, and ran to meet him, and kiss his hand when he appeared. These grateful creatures began to like me too. The favour and confidence shown me — by their worthy pastor was a passport to theirs, and I felt pleased with their frank cordiality, and encouraged it by every kindness in my power. There is a charm when far from one's native land, in meeting good-will from strangers. How little, too, does it cost to conciliate it with a people so simple and naturally grateful as the Italians are. When I witnessed the increase to their comforts, which very trifling sums could effect, I experienced a self-reproach at thinking how little I had done at home for the poor in my neighbourhood, and I wrote to the good clergyman of my parish, and sent him money to distribute to them. This step quieted my conscience a little, but I was reminded how much good the large sums I had lavished to buy the silence of the vile Figgins would have effected, and I writhed as it occurred to me that I was still, in spite of my precautions to elude him, liable to another invasion, whenever his purse should become empty. Had he not discovered me in Sicily, when I believed myself secure in his ignorance of my whereabouts, and had he not told me that it was in vain for me to endeavour to conceal myself from him. I trembled lest he should trace me to Sorrento, where I had, for the first time for years, found a little repose; and a consciousness of my insecurity, again

poisoned the peace I had lately been enjoying. I had come to Sorrento, to have breathing time in its seclusion to determine on my future plans to avoid Figgins.

Yet although no day passed by without my having thought of this man, I had postponed forming any resolution, and, like a school-boy during vacation, enjoyed the present reprieve from care, leaving painful reflections to the future. Why, thought I, should I anticipate trouble before it comes? If Figgins discovers I have been at Naples, he will learn that I left it for Rome, and will believe I have returned to England. At Capua I was unknown, and as no person in Naples is aware of my being here, I may surely count on being safe.

Thus I reasoned with myself. But although it is said that we are prone to believe what we wish, it was not so in my case. A latent presentiment that this wretch would discover my abode, took possession of my mind, and I felt that I should, sooner or later, be driven from Sorrento. And as this dread haunted me, I became more than ever attached to the place. No one over whom the doom of exile from the home he loved was impending, ever clung more to the yearning desire to continue in it, than I now did to remain in this enchanting spot.—Every time I gazed on its beauties, I sighed at the thought that I could not count on making it my home, for to return to Wales, to the scene of that event which had changed the current of my life, and poisoned my happiness, I felt to be impossible.

We are all more or less influenced by those near us. The chameleon, which is said to take its colour from the object in closest proximity, could not be more affected than I was, by the person with whom I had the most frequent intercourse. Il Padre Maroni's simplicity of heart and goodness had drawn me into a sincere regard for him; I liked his society, and a portion of the *calmness and tranquillity* of his life seemed to be infused into *mine while we daily met*. He was with all his simplicity and

ignorance of the world, and its usages, so right-minded, so charitable, and so pious, that an atmosphere of purity and goodness seemed to surround him, from which I dreaded to remove myself, as much as ever the inmate of a convent dreaded to quit the peaceful solitude, where he had found repose, to enter the busy world, of which he felt an instinctive terror.

I had experienced from strangers, wholly unprejudiced, either for or against me, by any previous reports, a good-will that on increased intimacy, had grown into friendship. The friends I had made were among the most excellent of men, Doctor Martelli at Turin, the Signor Bertucci at Naples, and Il Padre Maroni at Sorento. The regard these worthy individuals had conceived for me, had in a great measure vanquished the timidity and mistrust implanted in my breast, by the avoidance and dislike evinced towards me by the companions of my youth.

I had, in truth, previously to my sojourn in Italy, believed that I was fated to pass through life without a friend, and my heart pined for this blessing, which the last days of my dear Neville had taught me to appreciate. Now that I had secured a friend, on the stability of whose attachment I felt that I could count, I could not bear to leave him, and Sorento consequently became dearer to me than ever.

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## CHAPTER L.

MORE bitterly than ever did I now reproach myself for not having boldly met the first demand of Figgins with defiance. My utter folly and madness in having acceded to it, had sealed my doom. That act of insanity had alone placed me in the power of a wretch, whose reckless extravagance would entail a frequent recurrence of his exactions, and I should not only drag on existence in perpetual terror of exposure, lest in his fits of inebriety he should betray my secret, but with the conviction that my whole fortune could not suffice to satisfy the ever-recurring demands I anticipated that he would make. Rendered gloomy by these reflections, I sought to dissipate them, and wandered forth into the balmy air. I directed my course to my favourite walk, the brow of a hill on the opposite side of Sorento, commanding a view of the sea and surrounding country, so vast and beautiful, that often had the contemplation of it chased painful thoughts away, and soothed my distracted mind.

I took a volume from my pocket, and stretched beneath a group of chestnut trees, whose foliage afforded a shade from the too fervid rays of the sun, I was deep in its contents, when the sound of approaching footsteps met my ear. A presentiment of evil flashed through my mind, and yet it was no unusual thing for persons to visit this spot, which was pointed out to strangers as commanding the most extensive view in the environs, and often previously had persons visited it while I was there. But the truth is, the state of my nerves had rendered me *superstitious*, and I had remarked, that when thinking more than *ordinarily of certain persons*, it had frequently occurred, that I

had either seen, or heard of them very soon after. I had thought the previous day and night a good deal of Figgins, and no sooner did I hear the approaching footsteps, than it instantly flashed on me that they were his. I kept my eyes still fixed on the page, but the letters seemed to dance before them, and I was wholly unconscious of their sense. The footsteps came nearer, and at last paused close by me. Still I turned not, though a tremor thrilled my frame. A forced cough, as if to arrest my attention, failed to draw me from my book, and then a hand was laid on my shoulder, from the contact with which I started as if a serpent had stung me, and beheld the hated Figgins standing by my side.

"I am sorry to have started you so," said he; "I coughed on purpose to rouse you, but you were so taken up by your book you never heeded it. It's an advantage you gentlemen possess over us, that you can find pleasure in reading. It's only one of many advantages you have, and we poor devils would be badly off, if we did not sometimes by a lucky chance get some hold on the rich in order to draw away a little of the gold which they don't know what to do with. Now if I could find pleasure in reading, I need not be driven to gaming and drinking, to pass away my time, and then I would not be obliged to come back to you for money."

"When I last foolishly consented to give you so considerable a sum at Palermo," said I, assuming as severe and stern an air as I could summon up, "it was on the express condition that you should make no more demands on me."

"That's a condition easier made than kept," replied he. "If I had been lucky at play, you would not have seen me; but as I have not, here I am. I want three hundred pounds. It's no great sum after all, so you need not make a bother about it. Every thing has got so dear, that money vanishes before one *thinks it's half gone*. Time hangs so devilish heavy on my hands,

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that I can't get rid of the old codger without pitting him against the blind jade Fortune, or drowning him in wine. Now if, as I said before, I could pass away whole hours, as you do, in reading, I should require less money; but then, on t'other side, I do more good to trade than you do."

The cool effrontery of this speech so excited my anger and indignation, that I felt disposed to hurl the wretch who uttered it from the top of the declivity where we stood. Conscious, however, of my own inferior strength, prudence prevented my making the attempt, although I could not master my muscles sufficiently to prevent my countenance revealing my feelings. Figgins noticed this, for he assumed a quieter demeanour.

"I do not wish to enter on the subject of your tastes or propensities," observed I, with *hauteur*. "The point in question now is, whether or not I will consent to furnish means for their indulgence; and I tell you, that seeing how you have lavished the two large sums I have been already so foolish as to give you, on the pledge that you would never trouble me again, I must positively decline any further advance."

The fellow looked at me inquiringly, as if to see whether he had really understood me rightly, and seeing the determined expression of my countenance, his became flushed with rage into a dull crimson hue that increased its ferocity.

"So, then," said he, "I am to understand that you will not come down with the sum I demand? Think well what you are about before you provoke me. Once I have let out the secret on which your character, ay, and your life too, depends it will be too late to repent that for sake of a few paltry hundreds, which you can well spare, you allowed me to bring you to justice. Ay, you may look big, and pretend to doubt my power to ruin you, but you are no such fool as *really* to have the slightest doubt on *the subject*, for *you* 're not the man to have given me five hundred pounds for nothing, and two more to the back of 'em, if you

were not perfectly certain that you were wholly in my power. It 's all folly holding back, or argufying the topic. By this time you ought to be well convinced that I am a determined man, and will go through with whatever I take in hand. You saw how I defeated your cunning scheme to deceive me when you went from Nice to Turin, and how I found you out at Palermo. And, last of all, when you wanted me to lose all trace of you, by pretending to go to Rome, and then only went to Capua, where you stopped, and came right off here, fancying yourself safe from me — here I am come to prove to you that you can no more get rid of me, go where you will, than you can be quit of your shadow. Every step you take I am made acquainted with, and will continue to know while we both live. You are like a poor fly caught in a spider's web; every move you make to escape only serves to entangle you more and more in the meshes of *my* net, as happens to the silly fly in that of the spider. Once for all, you can't help yourself, so don't let us waste time in words, but give me the money.

"When I committed the folly of giving you money before," answered I, "it was wholly through a dread, that if you repeated the words I uttered in my delirious ravings, I should be thought actually insane; and as I have a child, to whose future prospects such a belief would be most injurious, all the world dreading to form an alliance with the offspring of a madman, I gave you the money to prevent your letting that supposition get abroad."

Figgins screwed up his mouth and whistled. Looked at me with a vulgar leer, and then said, "Oh! that 's the dodge is it? But you forget that I went to Wales, *not* to inquire whether you were mad, or not, but to find out whether any lady had fallen over a rock, (I knew she had been *thrown*,) and to search for the body, *which I found*, and have ready to bring forward as evidence *against you*."



My nervous system terribly shaken by this recurrence to the one fatal event of my life, I no longer felt the courage or firmness that but a few minutes previously had animated my breast. The loudness of Figgins's voice alarmed me, lest some English traveller might by chance be within hearing, and I suppose my altered countenance revealed to him that this was the moment to take advantage of my returning weakness.

He elevated his tone still higher, and almost screamed his threats. "Yes," cried the wretch, "I will at once go before a magistrate and give you up to justice. I have been too quiet, too patient with you, that's what I have been, but I'll be so no longer, I'll send you to the hangman, and then I wonder whether it will be worse for your daughter, on whom you pretend to dote, to be known as the child of a man that was hanged for murder, ay, and for the murder of her own aunt too; or as the child of a mad-man, which you so much dreaded that you have given me some hundreds, not to run the risk of it. A likely story indeed. You may tell that to the marines, but I'm too old a sailor to believe it. But I'm wasting time in talking to you, and so I'll be off," and away he walked.

Oh! the misery, the madness of that moment! my brain seemed to be on fire. I trembled in every limb — the agony of years was compressed into one terrible shock. I seemed to behold a gazing crowd pressing around me, a scaffold with all its fearful apparatus reared high in the distance, and the burning brand of shame impressed its indelible stamp on my brow, searing and entering it like a hot iron.

Overcome by mental torture I fell to the earth, and lost in a long and deep swoon the consciousness of my misery. When I recovered, I saw the wretch Figgins on his knees, bending over me. I shuddered, and closed my eyes to shut him from *my sight*. I found the burning taste of brandy in my mouth *and throat*, and really thought he had forced me to swallow

some deleterious mixture while I had been insensible. I felt a bottle applied to my lips by this man, and it was only by using my utmost exertions that I could prevent him from pouring its contents again into my stomach.

"Come, come, don't be so obstinate and foolish!" said he. "It was a devilish lucky thing for you that I happened to look back and saw you fall, for with your tight cravat, and nobody near to help you, you would certainly have been strangled had I not come to your aid. And it was quite as lucky, that I happened to have my dram bottle not empty, for it was the brandy I forced down your throat that brought you back to life, and a pretty sight of trouble I had to open your teeth, which were clenched as tight together as if you were dead. If you have any gratitude in you, you must feel obliged to me for saving your life. What would have become of your poor child, in a foreign land, if you had died here?"

I was so weakened and exhausted by the shock on my nervous system, that when Figgins mentioned my daughter, with reference to her isolated state, had I not recovered, that a violent fit of hysterical tears and sobs ensued; nor could I subdue them, although well aware that this unmanly exhibition of effeminate weakness would encourage him to make future demands.

"Come, come," resumed Figgins, "don't give way to your feelings. Nothing grows on a man so much as nervousness, if indulged. How much better would it have been for you to have given me the money I asked, than to have aroused my anger, and forced me to be harsh with you."

The wheedling tone he assumed was precisely that which an artful nurse might adopt towards a foolish, spoilt child, and while it made me hate him still more than before, were that possible, made me despise myself for the weakness which led him to presume to use it.

"Leave me," said I. "I wish to be alone."

"I will do no such thing," replied Figgins. "You are not in a fit state to be left to yourself. . Why, at this very moment, you tremble like an aspen leaf, and require some one to lean on to reach home. It's all nonsense our quarrelling. We can't do without each other. My silence is absolutely necessary for your character — for your life — and your money is indispensably necessary to me."

I was so paralyzed, so overpowered, that I was no longer capable of resisting the artful pleadings of this villain. Not that they made any impression on my reason, for even while he spoke, I knew that I was lost if I yielded. But my tortured brain and exhausted frame, now undergoing the terrible reaction of excitement, impressed me with a conviction that both must give way unless I could free myself, though even but for a temporary release from this harpy; and to gain this reprieve, mean and cowardly dastard as I was, I once more consented to make terms with him. — I remained silent for some time, and Figgins again renewed his demand.

"I will pledge myself, and this time I swear I will keep my pledge, not to demand a single shilling from you for three years to come if you will give me the three hundred pounds I want. In three years much may happen — death may release you from me; or you may die, and so be freed from any future demands from me."

Three years' freedom from seeing or hearing from this miscreant appeared to my bewildered mind, at that moment, cheaply purchased at the expense of the sum required; but a latent notion that he would break through this engagement, as well as he had done through the two former ones, suggested itself. But even this suspicion did not hinder me from yielding to his demand, so desirous was I to be rid of him, if only for a *short time*. "For this once," said I, "I will give you the money; *but, remember, if you break faith, expect nothing more from me.*

Call at my house, and tell my servant to come to me here. I will go to Naples to-morrow; get the sum wanted from my banker, and if you will meet me on the Mola, I will give it to you."

"Ah! I see you are too proud, or too revengeful — perhaps both — to take my arm to reach your house. Surely I'm as good as your servant for this service?" And Figgins looked angry.

"I will be candid with you," said I. "I do prefer my servant's arm to yours."

"More fool, you," observed he, — "Your servant respects you, because he knows nothing of your guilt, and you are not in his power. You have brought yourself to my level through my knowledge of your crime, and need not be so very proud and squeamish as to refuse my arm when I offer it."

"I know more of you than you imagine," replied I, angered by his insolence. "I am well acquainted with your past life, and the robbery of the jewels, for which the unfortunate lady's maid paid the penalty."

He gazed at me for a moment, in speechless astonishment, his face becoming deadly pale, and then, in evident embarrassment, said, "I don't know where you have picked up that old story, not a word of which is true; but no matter, true or false, what is it to you? Were you to charge me with it, you have no proof to bring forward, whereas, I can bring home to you the crime which has placed you for ever in my power; so the less you refer to bygones the better, I can tell you. And why can you not give me a cheque on your banker, which I can present and get cash for at Naples, without your having the trouble of going there?" demanded he.

"Because I do not wish it," replied I.

"Ah, well, it doesn't make much difference as long as I get

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the money," said he; "and to-morrow I will be on the look out for you on the Mola. At what hour will you be there?"

"At three o'clock."

"Good bye, till then; I'll send your servant to you."

And away walked Figgins, whistling as he went, leaving me a prey to bitter reflections, among which, a deep sense of shame at my own pusillanimity was not the least. My servant came to me, stating that a stranger had called at my house to tell him to do so, and I was glad to find that Figgins had not gone in person. Returning to my house, I encountered this vile fellow in company with two villanous looking men, who it instantly occurred to me, must be his companions at Salerno. He looked at me, but gave no mark of recognition; and although my servant remarked the circumstance of that impudent fellow, Figgins not having taken off his hat as I passed, I was glad, that by not doing so, he had avoided drawing the attention of his companions to me.

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## CHAPTER LI.

THE interview with Figgins had so shattered my nerves, that the evening that followed it was spent in a state of such despondency and mental prostration, that although I had recourse to an opiate, I could not obtain a single hour's repose during the ensuing night, and I arose the next morning so ill and nervous, that I was little equal to the visit to Naples. However, it must be undertaken, but I felt so weak and languid, that dreading a return of my fainting fit of the previous day, I determined to take my servant with me. I was haunted by the reflection that the vile companions of Figgins, who had drawn a conclusion that he had, on a former occasion obtained money by his visit to Palermo, would now date the reinforcement of his finances to his excursion to Sorento; and furnished with this clue, and perhaps aided by his indiscretion, trace me to be the donor of his riches, and naturally enough concluding that such large sums would not be given without some very urgent reason, discover that Figgins held me in his power. They, I had found out at Salerno, entertained the worst opinion of him, and would not be slow to set all their cunning to work to ascertain the secret by which he obtained such liberal supplies, for the purpose of turning it to their own profit.

"What, then, thought I, if instead of one harpy, I should have three pouncing on me?" and I trembled at the bare notion. "Had I not heard the indiscreet boastings Figgins had made to his associates? And were not they precisely the persons most likely to leave no means untried to discover his secret, and convert it to their own advantage? Of their cupidity had I not had

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oral demonstration? That their curiosity and suspicions had been excited their accompanying Figgins to Sorento, proved and justified my belief that they were bent on not losing sight of him. Might they not have followed him to the spot where our interview had taken place, and have thus traced the money he was about to receive to have come from me?"

As these thoughts passed through my mind, inflicting indescribable torture, I felt that I must leave Sorento, and again endeavour to elude the wretch who embittered my existence. — But where was I to go? Had he not traced me when I believed myself out of his reach? Had he not baffled all my schemes to evade his search? At length it occurred to me that in the *Diario di Napoli* of the previous morning, I had read that a packet was to sail, on the evening of Thursday, (this was Wednesday,) for Malta. I would engage accommodation in it for myself and family; send back my servant to discharge my bills, and remove my child and her nurse to Naples the following morning, arranging that they were to drive direct to the Mola, where they were to embark without having gone to any inn, and where I would be in attendance to see them on board. I would, after I had given the money to Figgins, pretend to return to Sorento; instead of doing which, I would go to an hotel where I was not known, remain *incognito* there until it was time to meet my child and her attendants on the Mola.

By this, as I thought, well-concocted plan, I would defeat the cunning Figgins to discover my retreat; and yet a dread crept over me that as he had hitherto, by what means I could not divine discovered my movements, so might he ascertain that I had gone to Malta. It was, however, worth trying, and having arrived at Naples, and after writing to Il Padre Maroni, to say I was suddenly summoned to England, which letter my servant was to take *back to Sorento*, I proceeded to my banker's; and in addition to *the three hundred for the odious Figgins*, and sufficient to dis-

charge my rent and bills at Sorento, I drew a considerable sum to take with me to Malta, in order that even my banker should not know that I had proceeded there. I then went to keep my appointment with Figgins, whom I found with blood-shot eyes, and swollen countenance, giving every indication that he was either still under the influence of intoxication, or that he had not yet slept off its effects. I advanced to the least frequented part of the Mergellina, and motioned to him to approach me. When he drew near, there was such an expression of stolid brutality in his face, that I saw at a glance something had gone wrong with him.


"Here is the money," said I, handing him the gold.

"It's all right, I dare say," observed he; "but since we parted, I have got into a terrible scrape. I haven't been to bed all night, and have a head-ache enough to split my skull. I have two friends, and pretty friends they are too, who made me play with them last night when I was so tipsy, as not to know one card from another, and they have won a hundred pounds from me, and insist on being paid. This will only leave me two hundred; not enough to keep me going for three years, as I promised. Give me therefore another hundred, and I'll break off with these sharks, who stick to me like leeches, feast like fighting-cocks, at my expense, and when they've made me drink more than my head can stand, get me to play with them, and win my money. They are two regular blood-suckers; and if I wasn't in their power —"

Here he stopped and looked embarrassed.

"Go away, go, as fast you can," said he; "I see them coming, and they must not see us together."

He walked off in an opposite direction, and I turned away into a house, the door of which happened to be open, to inquire whether or not lodgings were to be let there; taking care to prolong my conversation with the servant of the house, until they *had time to be out of sight*. I then went to an hotel, where I had





never stopped before, and having despatched my servant to Sorrento, remained within doors the rest of the day, nor left the inn the following one, until the dusk of the evening, when I drove to the Mola to meet my child and her attendants; and they having arrived soon after, I took berths for them and myself, and had my carriage put on board. There were so few passengers, that I was enabled to have the best cabin for my daughter and myself; and having taken possession of it, I did not leave it during the voyage, lest any one on board should recognize me, and so betray the place of my destination.

My last interview with Figgins had convinced me that I could hope for no rest while I remained within his reach. It was clear that his vile companions were not only determined to plunder him, but to discover the source whence he drew the money that supplied their reckless course of extravagance. He, it appeared, had just sense enough left to guess their aim; but in the state of constant inebriety which they encouraged him in, how long was it probable that he could retain sufficient reason and prudence to defeat their machinations, and guard the secret they were so anxious to discover?

How fortunate I considered myself to have got away from Naples, and to have left no trace behind me of whither I had gone. I reflected on the retribution which had fallen on the wretch Figgins, who while plundering me in the belief that I was wholly in his power, was himself the prey of the two villains who had no more mercy on him than he had evinced to me. How bitterly had he reviled them, apparently wholly unconscious that he himself was pursuing precisely the same system of conduct to me that he so censured in them. But thus it ever is with selfish and unprincipled men, who are ready to let fall the whole weight of their condemnation on whoever tries to wrong or injure *them*, but who wrong or injure others without one sentiment of remorse.

We arrived at Malta after a safe but tedious passage, and the sound of my native language, and the uniform of British soldiers, gave me a feeling of security not experienced since I had left England. The cleanliness of the place too, pleased me, and before many hours had elapsed, I found myself established in a comfortable abode, where I hoped to enjoy some tranquil days, free from the presence of the odious Figgins.

My daughter grew more companionable every day, and my happiest hours were those passed with her. Never did the most enthusiastic Dutch florist watch over the opening petals of his choicest flower, with such interest and delight, as I did over the opening intellect of my child. Her facility in acquiring every thing I taught her, seemed to me little less than miraculous, and her memory in retaining what she learned, was equally surprising. Often while pressing my lips to her open brow, did I vow, that never should it wear the blush of shame for me, if the sacrifice of my own feelings, nay, of my existence itself, could prevent it. To be loved by this pure and innocent creature as I was, was the one drop of comfort vouchsafed to sweeten my bitter cup of life, and to remain blameless in her eyes when arrived at womanhood, and worthy of her affection, seemed to me to be the sole end and aim of my existence.

I had been about three weeks at Malta, when walking one day at Valletta, I encountered Figgins accompanied by his villanous associates. My feelings at this encounter, it would be vain to attempt to describe. The conviction that henceforth it would be useless to endeavour to escape him, took possession of me, filling me with a terror that almost shook my reason. The companions of Figgins stared at me with inquisitive glances, but he took no notice of me, and passed as if I were a perfect stranger. Encouraged by this prudence on his part, I mustered up courage enough to take another turn, and confront the trio, and this *manœuvre* seemed to put an end to the suspicions of Figgins's

companions, for they no longer examined me with searching glances, but I observed they looked anxiously at every respectably dressed man they met, and then glanced at Figgins, who seemed aware that he was watched.

I returned to my home, my mind filled with presentiments of evil. I had not only Figgins now to dread, but his designing, and unprincipled companions, whose cupidity, excited by the knowledge that he had some means of obtaining large sums of money, would leave no scheme untried to discover the source whence it flowed, and by acquiring *his* secret, convert it to their own account. The conversation I had heard between these two miscreants at Salerno, when he was absent from the room, had made me aware that they were capable of any turpitude, and I trembled at the dread, that instead of having one ruffian to contend with, I should find myself in the toils of three.

That evening a letter was brought me, the contents of which were as follows: —

“Did I not tell you that it was in vain you tried to hide yourself from me, and that, go where you might, I should soon find you out? I am no blunderer. I have my spies every where; and were you to go to the most remote spot on the globe, there would I discover you. But while you cannot escape from me, I, in turn, am entangled in the snare of two of the greatest brutes on earth. They have found out that I am supplied with money by some one, and, full of suspicion, have guessed the truth, or something very near it. They are too knowing to believe that I could get money for nothing, and suspect it is for holding my tongue about some secret dangerous to him from whom I obtain it. These rogues have fastened themselves on me. They live wholly at my expense; they cheat me at cards; and leave nothing undone to inveigle me out of *my* secret and yours. I’ll own the truth to you. My firm belief is, that if they could *worm out the secret*, my life would not be safe in their hands.

They would get rid of me some how or other, in order that *they only* should draw away your money for keeping the secret; and though you may think me extravagant and unreasonable in my demands on you, I'll be sworn you'd soon find the difference if you had to deal with them, for they would strip you of every shilling you possess; and when they had made you a beggar, would, in all probability, show you up to justice. I tried to escape from 'em at Naples, and embarked, as I thought, cunningly enough, without their knowing a word of my intention of coming here. But no sooner had we got out to sea, when the two rogues, to my utter surprise and dread, appeared on deck, and reproached me bitterly for having, as they said, attempted to play them such a trick. They watch me night and day; and I confess I am afraid they will do me a mischief. They got all the money you gave me at Naples out of me, as they did what you gave me at Palermo. My life is made miserable by 'em, and I never go to sleep without dread that, as they watch me, I may let out the secret in *my* slumber, as you did to me. It's no pleasure or comfort to me now to get money from you, when I know these cormorants, these wicked robbers, will drain me of every shilling of it. I hate 'em worse than poison; but what can I do? They are two against one. I am afraid to drink with 'em, and afraid to refuse when they force the liquor on me. I'm tired of high feeding and wine, which, like a fool, I at first thought I should never get too much of. The very sight of these two villains makes me tired of life and every thing in it. I see but one way left to save myself, and to keep our secret close from them, for I can't answer for it when they make me tipsy, or when I talk in my sleep. The way I see you will, I know, object to, nor can I wonder at it; but I'm sure it's the only safe plan; and that is, for you to let me live in your house, find me in every thing I want, and leave me something to live on in your will, in *case I should last the longest*. This is the only way for me to get

out of their hands; and don't refuse my offer, or it will be worse for us both. I'll say its my intention to return to service, as all my money is spent. Let you inquire at the inns for an English servant, and I'll go round to each of 'em to offer myself, if a situation should be open. So you see the whole thing will appear quite natural. Once in your house, I'll make 'em understand that you don't allow followers, nor let your servants go out. They, finding that they can make no more out of me, will either go away or let me alone. Whatever crimes you may have committed, you are still a gentleman, and I'm sure I'll be safe under your roof. — Do follow this advice for both our sakes. If you refuse, it may be the cause of our ruin. I will pass under your window to-morrow morning early; and if you drop a bit of paper, with 'Yes, or No,' on it, that will do.

“J. FIGGINS.”

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## CHAPTER LII.

My agitation while perusing this production was so great, that my hand shook so violently it could hardly retain the paper. — Indignation at the terms of equality which it contained, mingled with terror, for my reason, even in the midst of my dread, admitted the prudence and wisdom of Figgins's suggestion. He felt his own weakness in the hands of his ruffian companions, and the consequences likely to result from it, and he besought me for my sake, as well as his, to rescue him from his perilous condition. And yet with the perfect conviction of the reasonableness of his advice, as well as of the danger of his being left with his present associates, my pride could not brook being treated by him in a tone of fellowship, and I angrily threw his letter from me, and trampled it under my feet.

Then came other and more bitter thoughts. "Was I, who revolted from the occasional sight of this man, to consent to have him a fixed resident beneath my roof, and be compelled to see him perpetually?" To bring a person of such licentious habits into the same house with my daughter, and her female attendant seemed to me nothing short of profanation, and I shuddered at the notion. Reflections of minor importance, but nevertheless, very embarrassing, followed. I had at present the precise complement of male servants that I required, consisting of my own personal domestic, and a man engaged at whatever place I resided, and discharged when I left it. This number had been found sufficient for the service of my small establishment, and on what plea could I add a supernumerary to it, without exciting surprise *on the part of the servants already in my employment?* Although

I had never encouraged any remarks from my valet on Figgins, I could see that he had left an unfavourable impression on him; and then flashed across my mind the recollection, that at Sorento my servant had seen Figgins pass close by me, with his worthless companions, without paying me the mark of respect of taking off his hat, so universally offered by every servant when he encounters a former master! What would *he* think of my again taking into my service a man who had betrayed this want of respect? Would it not give rise to suspicion, as well as to surprise? Yes, I felt it would, it must; and yet these minor evils must give way, before the great one of leaving Figgins any longer exposed to the machinations of his designing associates. — But what, if he, once an inmate beneath my roof, should forget his position, and presume to be familiar, or insolent? Might I not be compelled to exclude him, and by so doing, draw down on me his anger and vengeance? My mind became unhinged and confused, as all the advantages and disadvantages which might be produced, by whichever line of conduct I adopted, presented themselves to it.


I paced up and down the room almost like a maniac, endeavouring to acquire sufficient coolness to form a resolution, but so many contending feelings tortured my excited brain, that I feared to trust to its decision. I undressed, and threw myself on my bed, in the hope that a few hours' sleep might tranquillize me; but an opiate, to which I had recourse, failed to calm my senses, or induce sleep, and after an hour or two's fruitless efforts to repose, I left my couch, and opened the window to cool my fevered brow by the night breeze.

This refreshed and relieved me, and now I was better able to sift and compare the *pour et contre*, of consenting to the proposal of Figgins; and when morning dawned, I had formed my determination to have an interview with him, to state explicitly the *conditions on which I would accede* to his request, and the line of *conduct I expected him to pursue*.

When I looked out on the starry heavens, so bright, so calm, not a breeze agitating the leaves of the orange trees in my balcony, and not a sound to be heard but the gentle murmur of the waves as they broke on the sea-girt isle, a deep sadness filled my soul. All nature seemed to slumber; mankind had found a temporary solace from the cares of life, but this solace was denied me. I, I alone, waked, while others in a sweet oblivion lost the sense of chagrin. Was it not enough that I was haunted by regret for the one terrible event that had clouded the sunshine of my existence, that I mourned with undying grief the loss of that angelic being whom ruthless death had snatched from me, but I must now be tortured by finding myself in the power of one whom I despised, whom I loathed; and to escape the greater evil of my secret being discovered by two wretches even more base, if possible, than himself, I must receive him beneath my roof, and bear his odious presence, until death to him or me should relieve me from this galling penance?

How strong was the contrast afforded by the tranquil and beautiful scene commanded from my window, and the troubled thoughts that filled my breast! "Oh! nature, lovely beneficent Nature," thought I, "am I never more to be permitted to enjoy the blessings thou canst bestow? Have I learnt to worship thee, — to feel my heart melt into tenderness and gratitude to the Creator, as I contemplate thy charms, — only to know that gnawing cares so torture me, that, even the innocent pleasures thou canst confer, I am too wretched to taste, and that only in the grave can I hope for rest?"

At length, the grey dawn was followed by the rosy streaked clouds that herald morning. Another day was opening, bringing to some a continuation of happiness, — to others, as to me, a prolongation of woe, — to all, a short-lived leaf in either the garland of bright flowers that illumine, or the cypress-wreath that shadows life with gloom. The coming day, like the prece-





ding one, must fleet away, and bring us so many hours nearer to the goal to which we are all hastening — the grave. It is only the wretched that find consolation in this reflection, and often in my misery had I invoked it as now. But as the day became brighter, I was reminded that I must write to Figgins, and I seized a pen, and disguising my writing as much as I could, I wrote, "Be at my door, this night, at half-past twelve."

I had only time to twist the piece of paper, and put one or two brass coins in to prevent its being blown away, when I saw him for whom it was intended appear. I watched narrowly to be certain he was not followed, and when he approached near the house I threw down the little parcel, saw him take it up, disappear quickly, and I closed my window, and once more threw myself on my bed.

When my servant came to me at my usual hour of rising, I said to him, that should he happen to hear of an English servant wanting a place, I should be glad to engage one.

"I beg your pardon, Sir, but I really think that with the Maltese man we now have, who is a sober, steady, active, and willing man, there is quite enough to get through the work, and more too."

I had anticipated this observation; and though annoyed, was not taken by surprise by it.

"Very likely," said I; "but I do not so much want a servant to do the work now, but a person who, in case I should be summoned suddenly to England on business, which is more than likely, could accompany *me*, while I should leave you with my daughter."

This implied confidence mollified him, though I could see he was by no means pleased at the notion of my engaging a new servant.

*"But, pray, Sir, I beg pardon for asking, in what capa-*

city is the person you require to be until you may be called to England?"

Here I felt puzzled what answer to make, and he increased my embarrassment by looking me steadily in the face, with an expression of anxiety and curiosity.

"The servant I intend to engage," said I, "must make himself generally useful."

"Am I to understand, Sir, that he is to be put over me? for if this is to be the case, I would rather at once resign my place."

Why did not my reason suggest to me at this moment the advisability of taking advantage of the suggestion, and letting my servant go away? But thus it ever was with me; my weakness and tergiversation always prevented my profiting by the opportunities thrown in my way to render my position less embarrassing while there was yet time to take advantage of them; and it was only when too late, that I became sensible that I had thrown them away!

Before giving myself time for a moment's reflection, I replied, that the new servant was by no means to be placed above my present one; and, although still looking dissatisfied, he expressed his willingness to remain in my service.

I wrote a few lines to be left at the inns and library at Malta, stating that an Englishman might hear of a situation with a gentleman who required a servant; and having sent them to be posted in the halls of those places, I walked forth, some hours after, ill at ease.

Almost the first persons I encountered were Figgins and his companions. None of the trio appeared to notice my presence, which afforded me an opportunity of observing them. Figgins looked depressed and fatigued, his associates flushed and angry. *The two latter seemed to be quarrelling with him, while he ap-*

peared to maintain a dogged silence. I turned soon after, and walked near enough to them to overhear some of their words.

"Humbug, regular humbug," observed one. "We're too old birds to be caught with chaff. Where you found money before, you can find it again; for you'll never get us to believe you came to Malta for any other purpose than to follow some one on whom you have some claim."

"Yes, yes," said the other man, "it's no use whatsoever to try and himpose on us. We're not to be done, I can assure you; so out with the truth, or let us have some money. There's nothing to be made here. The natives are too sharp, and as for taking in the English officers here, it's not to be done."

I was afraid of being noticed by these men, if I continued any longer near them, so I turned away, convinced by what I had overheard that at least a portion of Figging's statement to me was correct.

Slowly and heavily dragged on the hours during the remainder of that day. I wished for, yet dreaded the interview I had arranged with Figgins. I entertained such a strong personal antipathy to him, that his presence was absolutely hateful to me, and yet believing as I did that the project he had suggested was the sole one that could separate him from his designing associates, who, sooner or later, might discover his secret and mine, I was desirous that he should be removed from contact with them.

Restless and agitated, often did I pull out my watch to see if the time for our meeting was drawing near.—An unhappy wretch, condemned to undergo some terrible operation under the knife of a surgeon, which he knows must be submitted to, or that his life will pay the forfeit, never experienced a greater desire to have it over, or a greater dread of the pain to be endured.

*At length the whole family had retired to rest. All was silent in the house; and, giving a sufficient time to allow my servants*

to be wrapt in sleep, I stealthily opened the hall door, and in a moment Figgins stood within it, in evident trepidation. I closed the door noiselessly, made him take off his shoes, lest a creaking sound on the stairs should disturb any of the inmates, and guiding him by the arm, though I shrunk with disgust from his touch, I led him to my room, taking care that the doors of both the adjoining ones should be secured.

He dropped into a chair the moment he entered; and this act of impertinent familiarity produced an instantaneous and disagreeable effect on my temper. He noticed it, I believe, for he said,

"I really can hardly stand, I'm so weak from agitation. I feared up to the very last moment that they would pounce out on me, and follow me here. Such a life as they have led me ever since we came to this place! They will insist on pouring wine and spirits down my throat, do all I can to prevent it; and it is only by pretending to be tipsy, and falling into a sort of lethargic sleep, that I can save myself from being destroyed by them, they are so anxious to make a beast of me. To-night I took to my bed pretending to be ill, and they, thinking me safe for the night, went out to drink, so I got away. They have picked my pockets while I made believe to sleep, and have ransacked my box. But they found nothing that could help them to make out where the money has come from. They're so mad that they can't get the secret out of me, that I sometimes think they are half disposed to murder me:" and he turned pale and cast a glance of fear around him.

"I believe," observed I, "that you are in actual danger with these ruffians with whom you have connected yourself."

"Ah, Sir!" replied Figgins, "being in people's power," and he looked at me, "makes one keep bad company."

The application of this remark came so home to my feelings, that as I glanced at this wretch seated in my presence I keenly felt its force.

"But though convinced of your danger," resumed I, "and willing to extricate you from it, it is only on certain conditions that I can consent to receive you beneath my roof."

"Bear in mind, Sir," observed he, "that the danger is not solely confined to *me*. You are also exposed to it, therefore in saving me, remember you save yourself too."

This reflection vexed me, although I could not deny its truth. It was plain I had to deal with a man who would not let me think that he was imposed on as to the motive of any service I might render him.

"The conditions on which I can receive you," resumed I, "are as follows: — You must always remember that you are my servant, and must treat me with the respect due from a servant to his master."

He screwed up his mouth on one side in a comical way, and answered, "I suppose I must before others."

I did not condescend to notice this impertinence, but resumed, "Your habits must be orderly, your conduct steady and sober."

"Oh! as for being sober," observed he, "I 've got such a sickener of drinking ever since I have been bullied into it by the two villains that have fixed themselves on me, that I don't think I'll ever take to it again as long as I live, and as to being orderly, its easy to be that when one's sober."

"But I wish to have an explicit understanding with you, a positive engagement, that you will be sober, orderly, and respectful while you continue in my house, before I consent to your entering it," said I, assuming as grave and dignified a manner as I could put on, for the purpose of awing Figgins.

"It is my intention to behave as well as I can, but no man can pledge himself, weak as all men are, never to break through good *resolutions*. If you don't like me, and I don't like you, which *may very probably be the case*, why, we can part whenever I am

wholly out of the clutches of the two rogues from whom I want to get away, and if ever I come within their reach again, I'll give you leave to call me the greatest fool alive."

I was compelled to be satisfied with this vague, undefined promise, if promise it could be called, and having told him who made it, to go round to the places where I had posted up the notice that I wanted a servant, and then to present himself formally at my house, I dismissed him from it as stealthily as I had admitted him, first taking especial care to ascertain from the window that no one was lurking near to see him depart, a precaution I must do him the justice to say, he evinced as great an anxiety about as I did. I retired to my pillow, sick at heart — and heaven knows, little disposed to sleep.

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## CHAPTER LIII.

I DID not leave my bed until late the following morning, and was only just done breakfast, when the Maltese servant (my English one, having gone out to execute a commission for me) announced that a person wanted to see me. This person was Figgins; and I was glad he had come during the absence of Thomas, who knowing him since Nice, would very probably have expressed the bad opinion I guessed he entertained of him, and having done so previously to my engaging him, would, doubtless, think it strange that I should then have done so.

I settled all preliminaries with Figgins as quickly as I could. It was agreed that he was to enter my house the next day; and he then told me, that he had, ever since his sojourn at Naples, prepared his troublesome companions for leaving them, as he had often times stated his intention of going to service again, could he but find a suitable place; a declaration, he said, which they wholly disbelieved, from having previously known that he had possessed large unaccountable, or at least, unaccounted for, sums of money.

The truth was, the vain boastings of Figgins, when in his cups, had convinced his unworthy companions, that a fellow of intemperate habits, and with the power, however attained, of gratifying them, never would — never could — return to service again. — Now, however, that he was putting his intention into effect, it remained to be seen what plan they would pursue; and on this point, I felt quite as nervous as Figgins.

When Thomas returned from executing the commission I had *given*, he told me that while absent, he had heard of more than *one servant wishing to enter my establishment.*

"I engaged one while you were out," said I, affecting as much indifference of manner as I could; "and it happens to be the man who was in my family, when I was ill at Nice."

"You don't mean Figgins, Sir?" asked Thomas with a look of such utter astonishment, as brought the blood to my face, to conceal which, I turned and affected to be busily occupied turning over the pages of an account-book on the table.

"Yes!" replied I; "it is Figgins."

"Well, Sir, I am sorry you have engaged that man; for, if the truth must be spoken, I have not a good opinion of him."

I felt my face glow, and my ears tingle, but I took care that he could not see my countenance.

"Had you any positive cause for your bad opinion?" inquired I.

"First, Sir, he was not a sober man then, and was so prying and inquisitive, that he never ceased asking questions about the family, and where they came from. In short, Sir, all manner of impertinent questions. I told you of this, Sir, after you got better; and I thought you, too, Sir, did not like him to sit up or be near you."

"Did you tell me?—I had forgotten all about it; but now I do remember something faintly about it. I wish I had recollected it before I engaged him. — Now—it is too late,—I have hired him."

"I 'm afraid he has not mended with regard to his drinking," observed Thomas; "for I saw him once at Palermo, perfectly tipsy, and here, also, walking about with two very ill-looking fellows, no more sober than himself. Don't you remember, Sir, the day you were taken ill out walking at Sorento, when a strange man came to tell me to go to you; how, when you were returning home, leaning on my arm, we met this very Figgins, with the two men who are now at Malta: and he must surely have been *very tipsy then*, for though he passed close to you, Sir, he never



so much as took off his hat, or even touched it when he saw you."

"How very odd that I did not see him," observed I; "but, probably, he no more saw me than I did him."

"Don't you think, Sir," resumed Thomas, "that you could get off taking him, by making him a small present for the disappointment?"

"No, no! having hired him, I will give him a trial," replied I. "Curiosity is a very common defect; and I am sorry to say there are few sober servants, like you, to be met with, Thomas. Send your young lady to me, without delay" (I saw he was about to make another attempt to induce me to get rid of Figgins). "Go quickly, for I want particularly to see her."

Thomas withdrew, evidently surprised and annoyed, leaving me pained and embarrassed, though not at all surprised, at the result of our interview; and it required all the winning wiles, and fond caresses of my child, to restore me to aught resembling composure.

When Figgins presented himself, towards the evening, he looked so pale and haggard, that I guessed he had had some very disagreeable scene with his worthless companions; and this presentiment increased my own nervousness. He was, however, perfectly sober; and this was some comfort, for I feared he might have indulged in a parting potation with his companions, and have borne unmistakeable proofs of the fact. I walked out, as was my usual custom, and saw, at a distance, the odious associates of Figgins, apparently in deep consultation together. An instinctive dread of encountering them, led me to turn my steps in another direction, although I had no definite notion *what* I had to fear, or what excuse they could make for addressing me.

*I returned home and Figgins opened the door to give me ingress. He whispered in my ear as I entered—*

"I want to speak to you when all are asleep, and will go to your room."

I nodded assent and passed on. What could he have to say to me? A thousand painful conjectures presented themselves to my mind, each and all fraught with annoyance.

When Thomas served tea, I noticed a great change in his aspect — he looked offended and gloomy, seemed desirous to speak to me, but I gave him no opportunity, as I affected to be deeply occupied with a book. — At length he broke silence, and after apologizing for interrupting me, begged leave to have my permission to take the key of the hall door to his room every night.

There was a certain manner in making this unusual, though simple request, that was meant to elicit my attention and inquiry to the cause, but I asked no question, and merely said I saw no objection to it.

"If I might, without offence, Sir," said Thomas, "say a few words to you, I should be glad."

I answered, "Yes, certainly." Although there was nothing I more wished to avoid at that moment than any representation relative to Figgins, which I fully anticipated would be the subject on which Thomas proposed speaking.

"Not wishing, Sir, to draw blame on, or to injure a fellow-servant, I have never told you that a continued correspondence has been kept up between Miss Herbert's nurse and Figgins, ever since you left Nice. Indeed, before you left it, so great an intimacy subsisted between them, that when he went to Wales, he wrote to her from thence. She wrote to him from Palermo, from Sorento, and from Malta, Sir, the very day after you arrived here. — I always noticed that he came to wherever you were, as soon as he could hear from her; and there was such a mystery made about the letters, and such a desire to conceal from me that any were passing between them, that had not accident made me acquainted with the fact, I should not have known it. Nurse used

*Marmaduke Herbert, II.*

to give her letters to him to the Faquino to put in the post, charging him especially not to let me see them, and the man thinking it was only a bit of fun, or some courting going on, used to let me see the address. Thinking Figgins a bad fellow, who would deceive and make a fool of her, for she is quite a simpleton, I spoke to her and advised her not to keep up any more correspondence with him; but she said he would soon become a rich man, and had promised to marry her, and make a lady of her soon, provided she always wrote to him from whatever place she went to. I thought it my duty, Sir, to tell you this, for it would be a pity to have the poor simpleton of a woman led astray by this fellow, and this is *one*, (and he laid a peculiar stress on the word *one*,) of the reasons why I am so sorry he has been hired."

So now the mystery of how Figgins was kept aware of my movements, whatever pains I took to conceal them, was disclosed. And how cunningly the rascal had suborned this weak and silly girl to give him the information he required!

I listened with perfect astonishment to the statement of Thomas, wondering how I had been so stupid as not to have hitherto suspected the channel through which Figgins became aware of my movements: but it was too simple, too natural to be divined. His boast of having everywhere emissaries who would reveal my residence to him, wherever I might direct my course, was too imposing not to have been credited by me, who in my terror of this miscreant, had invested him with a sort of melo-dramatic power and effect, that greatly served his purpose of working on my fears. I was shocked, as well as surprised at the revelation of Thomas, but assuming as calm an aspect and manner as I could, I merely said, "I wish Thomas, you had told me all this before; I should then have been on my guard, and would *certainly not have hired* this man; as it is, I cannot discharge him *merely because he has been* corresponding with the nurse, al-

though it will be well to prevent their associating while they continue in the same house."

"That will, I fear, be difficult, Sir, for the foolish woman is much attached to Figgins, or Howard, as he used to call himself while he was away, for he changed his name, for a fortune, as nurse said; but this change of name, coupled with the rest of his conduct and habits, looks very suspicious in my mind."

When Thomas withdrew, I sank into a chair confounded at the discovery of the manner in which I had been duped by Figgins, and his tool, the nurse. How little had I dreamt, while I was puzzling my brains to plan my escape from him, that I carried with me an agent of his, who would defeat all my schemes. How stupid, how foolish did I now appear in my own eyes! I felt humiliated, and more angry than ever with myself, but what availed my anger? I could not change a single one of the annoyances of my position, and nothing was left but to bear it as best I could. Nothing adds more to self-reproach (always a painful thing to bear) than the perfect consciousness that the evils we are undergoing have been entailed by our own folly. This aggravation to mine had long existed, but this last discovery greatly increased it. I now perfectly remembered Thomas having told me at Nice that Figgins had been questioning the nurse very frequently and closely relative to me, my abode, and other particulars; and yet this information which ought to have placed me on my guard, and taught me the probability that he might turn this weak woman to account, in discovering my whereabouts, had never once entered my thoughts. What so natural as, that finding this tool ready to his hand he should employ her, so that while I, believing I was taking effectual means to defeat any search he might make for me, *fancied myself securely hidden in the labyrinth I had formed.*

his agent, mocking all my schemes, could send him a clue to defeat them.

When the house was at rest, the stealthy tread of Figgins announced his approach to my room. — Every creak of the stairs as he ascended alarmed me, lest Thomas too should overhear it, and when he entered the chamber, I arose and locked the door to preclude interruption.

“I wished to tell you what passed between Motcombe, Bradstock, and myself,” said Figgins, “but as it’s rather a long story, I suppose you’ll not object to my sitting down;” and he dropped into an easy chair, *vis-à-vis* to mine. How I longed to punish him for this liberty, but I dared not provoke him. “I took care,” said he, “to let those two infamous rogues be present, when I noticed the paper posted up, requiring an English servant — ‘Hallo!’ observed I, ‘this seems to be something to suit me: hang me, if I don’t go and offer myself.’

“‘And who’ll give you a character I should like to know?’ said Motcombe.

“‘Yes, yes, my boy,’ puts in Bradstock, ‘who’ll say any good of you?’

“‘That’s my affair,’ says I. ‘Now, come Figgins, make an end of all this mystery and fool’s play. What’s the good of it? We are too deep to be done by you — your scheme of entering service again can’t take us in; — you think that when you are in place we’ll go away, and you’ll be rid us, but it’s no such thing. We’ll stick to you like leeches, get your neck into a scrape as sure as you’re alive; whereas, if you go share and share alike with us in the booty you have made, or may make, we’ll lead a jovial life, and keep each other’s secrets.’

“I tried all I could to persuade them that there was no secrets in the case; that the money I had spent so freely with them, came from a relation who died; that it was now all gone; and that I *had no resource to make a living but by going to service.* They

wouldn't believe me, do all I could, and swore they'd never stop until they found out the truth. I pretended there was nothing to find out, and I came off here to offer for the situation. When I went back I met them, and when I told them I was engaged they would hardly believe it. That's one of the disagreeable things among fellows like them, they never believe a word they say to each other. When at last they found I was coming here, Bradstock had the impudence to propose to me to let 'em in at night, to rob this house. Yes," seeing me look surprised, "hang me if he hadn't?

"The packet will sail in two days,' said Motcombe, 'and the night before, you can open the door to us, or hand out whatever valuables there are in the house, and we'll be off early in the morning, and no one will find us out; nor will you get into a scrape, for we can cut through the lock of the door from the outside, without much noise, which will bear you harmless, for no more suspicion can fall on you than on any other servant in the house.'

"I told them I never would turn a robber; and then they twitted me because of a great past scrape I had the misfortune to fall into; and said, in for a penny, in for a pound. I was already enough in their power to ruin me, and it was no use holding back now.'

"The truth is, I *am* in their power, that's the long and short of it, and heavily have they made me pay for it, but I'm so tired of being bullied and plundered, that, I'd almost rather give myself up to justice, than drag on life in their clutches. I know *they* 're no better than myself, and I believe, on the contrary, they are much worse; but, if I was to try to show them up to the law, they'd swear away my life. They're two to one, and hold by each other against me."

I experienced a loathing sense of degradation as I listened to *Figgins's* acknowledgment of his own turpitude. I felt that an

inferior, a menial must have indeed formed the very lowest estimate of the character of his employer, before he could thus venture to lay bare his guilt to him. To do so, was a tacit avowal of equality between them, a sort of mode of showing that it was taken for granted, that both were embarked in the same boat. Pride is one of the last qualities that forsakes him who has long indulged it; and serves as the medium by which his punishment for sin is most frequently inflicted. I had passed through humiliations enough, heaven knows, to have crushed mine, yet it still survived in my breast, as the pangs I endured whenever it was assailed, but too well proved.

"I have now told you the whole truth," said Figgins, "and have prepared you for whatever these villains may write against me. They'll do all they can to hurt me, I know, but, I'll keep out of their way, and remain within doors till I can find out if they're gone from Malta. In the mean while, keep the windows well bolted, and the door secure, at night, for fear of accidents, and fire-arms loaded will do no harm."

I dismissed him for the night, ashamed of the interview.

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## CHAPTER LIV.

THE following day, Thomas informed me, that he had been grossly insulted by Figgins because he had told that individual that he must not go into the nursery; and had informed the nurse that she must not sit in the room assigned to the men-servants.

"You'll find, Sir," said Thomas, "that it won't do to keep this man. He has a violent and ungovernable temper, and is by no means disposed to submit to the regulations of a steady family. I was sure it would be so, and am sorry to find I was right. The two fellows he used to walk about with, are continually hovering about this house since he came into it, and they are such suspicious-looking persons, that I cannot help thinking they mean no good. I must, however, say, Figgins shows no desire to see them, for he hasn't been once out since he entered your service, and he requested me in case they should call to inquire for him, to say he was out, or was not to be seen. Judging from his manner, Sir, I should say he was afraid of them."

"That argues in his favour," observed I, "he has probably discovered that they are worthless, and wishes to keep up no further intercourse with them."

"I'm afraid, Sir, there's not much to choose between them. But, at all events, I hope you will give your own instructions to nurse and to Figgins, relative to their keeping apart."

"Should they infringe your orders, Thomas, I certainly will."

*The remainder of the day passed over quietly. I heard no*

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more complaints. I sat up later than usual that night reading, and was about to retire to my bed-room, when I heard a noise at one of the windows on the ground-floor. I listened attentively, and became certain that some person or persons were endeavouring to force open the window; but they were so cautious in their efforts, that every five or six minutes they discontinued them, lest the noise should be remarked. The warning given me by Figgins of the intention of Motcombe and Bradstock to rob my house, now flashed across my mind. This warning proved his good faith to me, at least. I hesitated for a few minutes what I had best do, and then seizing a poker in my hand, the only weapon within my reach, having no arms, I descended to Thomas's sleeping room, and awoke him, though not without some difficulty. Indeed his snoring, which was so loud as to be audible at a considerable distance, had been, I conclude, heard through the window, and had encouraged these miscreants to attempt to force it, believing that the noise they made would be lost in his.

While I was yet shaking Thomas's shoulder to arouse him, I heard Figgins leave his room, and in another moment he stood before me. He looked significantly at me, and exclaimed, "There are robbers trying to force the window; I have got pistols," and he pointed to a case in his hand — "I hope you have arms, Sir?"

"No, none," replied I.

"Hush, make no noise," resumed Figgins, "my advice is, that we keep perfectly quiet; let them force the window, and I will shoot them, one after another as they enter."

Never shall I forget the demoniacal expression of Figgins's countenance as he spoke. The triumph of a ferocious hatred and vengeance flashed in his malignant eyes, such as may be *seen in the face of some fierce animal about to pounce on its prey.*

"No, no," replied I, "I want no blood shed I wish to guard my property, but not to wound or kill the robbers."

"What, would you spare 'em, spare such villains as these, who wouldn't mind a pin killing us all?" said Figgins, forgetting in the excitement of his hatred and thirst for blood, that he was betraying, before Thomas, his knowledge of the robbers.

This oversight on his part did not pass unnoticed, for Thomas looked sharply at him, and remarked "Oh! *you* know the robbers, do you?"

Before he could reply, I cried out, "Who's there? We're armed; and your blood be on your own heads if you compel us to fire."

We instantly heard footsteps rapidly retreating from the window. Figgins, frantic with rage and disappointment, rushed to the hall-door to open it, but the key not being there, his anger knew no bounds. He uttered oaths and execrations at not being able to get out and pursue the robbers, cursing his luck at missing such a chance of destroying them.

"That fellow is a wild beast rather than a man," said Thomas, *sotto voce*, shuddering as he looked at me; "I am sure he would rather kill a man than not."

"Who took the key away?" demanded Figgins. "Had it been in the lock, I would have pursued the villains, and brought them down."

"I took the key," replied Thomas.

"What, did you take me to be a thief?" said he, angrily.

"I make it a point always to take the key at night," observed Thomas, calmly.

"Let the police be informed in the morning, Thomas, of this attempt," said I; "and inquiries be made to detect those who made it."

"And if they should be discovered, Sir, I hope you will



prosecute them to the utmost extremity of the law," observed Figgins. "But it was a sin, ay, and a shame too, to have let them off, when I could have shot them as easily as rats are shot when running into a trap."

We all retired to our beds again; the dislike of Thomas to Figgins increased tenfold by the discovery of his warm desire to shoot the robbers; while I could perceive that Figgins, on his side, had conceived a strong aversion to Thomas, from the circumstance of his having taken out the key of the hall-door.

For me, a vague dread of danger to come, was more predominant in my mind than gratitude for that recently escaped. Men so desperate as the late companions of Figgins were not likely to remain inactive, and that they would draw trouble on me, I felt a strong presentiment, although the precise manner by which they might accomplish it I could not divine.

The next morning Thomas went to lay information before the police; who, after taking down his report, sent persons to examine the window, and note down the state in which it had been left. It was found by the marks, that the tools used in the attempt must have been those generally employed by burglars. This circumstance the police thought might lead to the discovery of the perpetrators of the offence; and a diligent search was set on foot for their detection.

While Thomas was absent on this errand, Figgins stole to my chamber.

"I told you, Sir," said he, "that these villains proposed to me to rob the house. I know what they are capable of. Oh! why did you prevent me from shooting them? I could so easily have done it, and had the law on my side too. 'T was folly, 't was downright madness to have stopped me. Once rid of those two villains, *I* should have been at rest, and in peace for the rest of *my* life; and *you*, too, would have found the benefit, for then *I* *should not be compelled* to come and fix myself on you, which I

am sure must be disagreeable to *you*, and is anything but pleasant to me. I hope, however, they are both off by the packet that was to sail this morning, but what security have we that they mayn't come back, when the attempt to break into this house blows over."

"If they have gone," said I, "your best plan would be to take the opportunity of their absence, to leave Malta, and go to some place where they cannot find you out. I will furnish you with means to depart, and regularly send you a yearly stipend of fifty pounds a-year, wherever you go to."

"Ah, you don't know them!" replied he, "if you did, you wouldn't reckon so confidently on my escaping from their clutches. No, my only chance was their death, and *you* have made me lose that," and he shook his head, and looked bitterly at me. "They are, as I said before, two against one, when I'm alone. While I stick to you, we are two and two, and it will go hard against us if we don't prove a match for 'em."

Angered by his familiarity, with some portion of my old *fierté*, I drew up, and desired that he would not presume to include me in any league, offensive or defensive, against the two bad men in question.

"Don't drive me raving mad," exclaimed he. "What's the use of this false pride with me when we're here alone together. Are we not in the same boat, and exposed to the same danger? and should we not combine our efforts to balk whatever schemes these villains may form against us?"

"I have nothing to do with these men, and they can have nothing against me; why, therefore, should I fear them?"

"You may yet find to your cost that you are mistaken," observed Figgins. "Your safety depends on me — that *you* must know as well as I do. Now, unfortunately, I am in *their* power, as *you* are in *mine*, and if they were to take any steps against me, and I was brought into a scrape, I cannot answer for your secret

not being exposed. Let us understand each other, once for all, while I am safe you shall be so. The whole thing hinges on this."

A knock at the door announced the return of Thomas, and putting his hand to his lip, in token of silence, Figgins hurried from the room to admit him.

"The first person I met in the street, 'Sir," said Thomas, "was one of the suspicious looking fellows I used to see walking about with Figgins. He appeared quite unconcerned, and swaggered by me, as if nothing had happened, and yet I can't help thinking he and his friend were the very men who forced the window, for if you noticed, Sir, Figgins let out that he suspected *who* the robbers were; and what makes me think all the worse of him, he seemed most anxious to shoot 'em in cold blood, which, considering they were so lately his constant friends and companions, looks very strange. The police have all set to work to discover the burglars, and I hope will find 'em out."

It was clear that Thomas entertained the worst opinion of Figgins, and what was infinitely more embarrassing to me, took no pains whatever to conceal his opinion from me. Indeed, he seemed actuated by a desire to disclose his sentiments on this subject, in order to prepare me for some anticipated mischief. How strange, then, must it appear in his eyes, that I should still continue to retain a man, of whom he had formed such suspicions! I felt ashamed to meet his eye, and yet could not bring myself to rebuke him for his evil thoughts of Figgins, although every indication and expression of them was a reproach to me. How had I lost the respect of my servant; and, alas! forfeited my own.

I walked out after breakfast, and encountered only one of Figgins's late companions. He eyed me narrowly, and walked on in the direction of my house, while I proceeded in a different one. *Where could his associate be? Had he left Malta, and wherefore? I found myself thinking a good deal of these bad*

men, and wondering what they were going to do, and when, conscious of my vague anxiety about them, I endeavoured to reason myself into the belief that they, or their actions, could be nothing to me, a presentiment of evil to come through them, could not be conquered, and an undefinable alarm connected with them haunted me. Here was I, meeting at every step, Englishmen, from whom, although personally unknown to me, I might have claimed assistance to defeat any conspiracy formed, or forming against me, were I not in the power of Figgins. But I trembled at the bare notion of his being confronted with any one, however determined he might be to guard my secret. There was something in his appearance and manner well calculated to impress persons with an unfavourable opinion of him, and creates surprise, if not suspicion, that I should retain such a servant. I felt, that by one act of folly, of madness, in yielding to his threats, I had placed myself out of the pale of sympathy with the worthy portion of my fellow men, and that I must continue to drag on life, a prey to perpetual anxiety and terror.

When I returned home, Thomas, on admitting me, related that one of Figgins's late associates had, soon after my departure, knocked at the door, and inquired to see the servant who had entered the establishment a few days before. "As Figgins had requested me to say he was out when any one wanted to see him," said Thomas, "I told his friend he was not within."

"I know *he is* within," replied he, "and I am determined to see him."

"I have told you he is not," repeated I, "so it's no use your keeping me from my work."

"Tell him that he'll find himself mistaken, if he thinks that he can shake off, or conceal himself from *old friends*," answered he, "and be sure to add, that the most dangerous *enemies* are made out of old friends, when people try to get away from 'em."

"There was something so malicious and spiteful in this

man's look and manner, that I just thought I 'd bring down his impudence a little," observed Thomas, "so I said, — 'the new servant is out with the police, looking for the robbers who tried to get into this house last night,' and I fixed my eyes on his face while I spoke. I assure you, Sir, he turned as red as fire, when I said the words; but he tried hard to look unconcerned.

"'Oh! he is, is he?' said he, 'Give him my compliments then, and tell him I 'm glad he remembers the old proverb, "set a thief to catch a thief."' He was then walking off, but he returned and said, 'Pray what's the new servant's name?'

"'Why, as you 're his friend, you surely must know,' answered I. He looked vexed, but gave a sneer, and said: —

"'When a man goes by more names than one, his friends don't always know by which to inquire for him; but tell the new servant, whether he is now Mr. Figgins, or Mr. Howard, that Mr. Motcombe is on the look out for him,' and away he went.

"Figgins had been listening to all that passed, hid behind the door of the waiting-room, off the hall; and when the door was closed, he came forth, Sir, as pale as a ghost, and absolutely trembling. 'What are you so afraid of?' asked I.

"'Afraid,' repeated he, his lips shaking, 'I — am not afraid, I 'm only surprised at the rascal's impudence.'

"And ever since, Sir, he seems all over in a twitter, quite cast down like, though he tries all he can to hide it. He asked me to let him have a glass of brandy, and when I refused, he gave money to the kitchen woman to go off to the next shop to bring him some. Now, Sir, I 've told you all that passed, that I should not be blamed if any thing happens; but it seems to me to be very dangerous to have a man in the house who has such persons coming after him, and threatening him. They must know something very bad against him."

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## CHAPTER LV.

TOWARDS the evening of the day of Motcombe's visit to Figgins, I was disturbed by clamour and the sound of quarrelling in the servants' offices, a very unusual circumstance in my house, for Thomas, aware of my nervous temperament, and abhorrence of noise, always took especial care to maintain quietness among the servants. It instantly occurred to me that Figgins must be the cause of this tumult, and consequently I did not ring the bell to inquire; but the clamour increased, and at length Thomas rushed up stairs, and, in great agitation, entered my room.

"I have been struck by that drunken sot Figgins, Sir," said he, "who has been drinking spirits ever since the visit of Motcombe this morning, and is now so intoxicated, that when I tried to prevent his going to the nursery, he struck me, and tore my clothes, as you see. I intend going for the police, to take him away, for it is impossible to submit to such usage."

I felt the blood rush to my face, but conscious of all the mischief that might occur if Thomas put his threat into execution, I observed that it would be better to let him sleep off his inebriety, and that I was sure he would be sorry for his bad behaviour when he came to his senses. While I was yet speaking, I heard him staggering up the stairs, and in another moment he came into the room, his face bloated and crimson, and his eyes flashing with anger. Never had I beheld a more revolting object.

"I say," exclaimed he addressing me, "will you allow this blockhead to insult me, and dictate where I am, or am not, to go?"



"Leave the room at present," said I, "and go to bed; to-morrow I will hear what you have to say."

"To-morrow!" reiterated he. "That 's a good un, how-somdever. You will hear what I have got to say now; and, what 's more, *you shall* too. — Come, come, don't think to frighten me with your grave looks. You know well enough that if I chose to speak, you 'd soon be glad to cry peccavi; and, what 's more, if you don't at once turn this here impudent rascal out of doors, I *will* speak out. I 'm not going to be bullied and brow-beat by a fellow like this. I 'm not to go and see the nurse when I like; I 'm not to smoke forsooth, because you dislike the smell of tobacco; I 'm not to get drunk when I like; in short, I 'm to be a slave, and under the orders of this here numskull, when I ought to be treated as well as yourself, seeing as how I have you wholly in my power, as you well know."

"Had I not better go at once for the police, Sir?" said Thomas, looking perfectly thunderstruck.

"No," replied I; and approaching Figgins, I made a strong effort to *appear* calm, — to be *really* so was beyond my utmost effort, — I spoke to him — "Let me advise you to go to bed; to-morrow you will regret having behaved ill. Do, Figgins, retire to your room."

"Not until you have turned this rascal out of the house, and made me upper servant to rule over all the others. It isn't much to ask, when I might command you; yes, *you*," and he stared provokingly in my face. "When I might show you that, for all you pretend to be *my* master, I am *yours*."

The astonishment of Thomas, at hearing all this, could only be equalled by the mingled emotions of rage, shame, and indignation which filled my breast. I absolutely trembled from the violence of my feelings, although I did all in my power to prevent *this symptom of agitation* from being seen.

"*You had better sit down*," said Figgins, "for you 're in

such a taking you can hardly stand, and I'll set you the example." And he sank into the most comfortable chair in the room.

"I can't remain and see you insulted in this manner, Sir," observed Thomas; "and if you will not allow me to go for the police to take this man away, or to turn him out myself, I really must leave the house."

"Leave the house! Why, that's just what I want, what I've been driving at," exclaimed Figgins. "So, go along; and never let me see your face here again as long as you live."

"Do not leave the house Thomas," said I. "You see this man is so much intoxicated that he knows not what he says or does."

"What, do you ask the rascal to stay before my face, after I have told him to go?" demanded Figgins, furious with passion; and rising from his seat, he approached me in a menacing attitude.

"If you dare to lift your hand against my master," exclaimed Thomas, placing himself between the ruffian and me, "I will throw you out of the window."

Figgins aimed a blow at him, but in the exertion lost his balance and fell on the floor, striking his head so violently against the table that the blood rushed from the wound, flowing over the carpet. He turned so very pale, that for a few minutes I really believed he was either dead or dying. He was totally insensible too; and Thomas also imagined that all was over with him.

Shall I confess the truth; shall I expose the turpitude of my own hardened heart, and acknowledge that a gleam of joy passed through it, when I believed I was for ever released from the power of the wretch who had so lately insulted — tortured me; and who held my honour — my very life, in thrall. To be rid of him without sin or crime, without having even willed his death, was as if the weight of a mountain had been removed from my breast.

*Marmaduke Herbert, II.*

But better feelings came. That he should rush before his offended God in a state of brutal inebriation, with all his sins on his head, was so shocking, that I busied myself in using every effort to restore him to life as strenuously as if his existence were desirable to me.

"Oh! Sir," said Thomas, "he is not worthy of this care. You could do no more by a good man than by this wretch."

"Humanity, Thomas, has its laws, and they must not be violated. The more unworthy is this unfortunate man, the less fit is he to die; and the more is it my duty to save him if possible."

"I hope, Sir, you may never have cause to repent this humanity," observed Thomas; "but I fear this wretch will be a torment to you as long as he lives. Forgive me, Sir, for presuming to forget the difference between us, and for speaking to you so freely. I know not how, nor why, this man dares to threaten you, and behave as if you were in his power, but that he does so is quite clear; and that you, Sir, permit it, I grieve to say, is equally so. I cannot stay in the same house with him, to be a witness to all this. I could not, — indeed, Sir, I could not," — and tears started into his eyes, — "stand it. Oh! Sir, how sorry I am to see you so ill-treated," and he put his handkerchief to his eyes, and positively wept.

While he was speaking, I was occupied in binding the head of Figgins with my handkerchief, and in forcing a little cold water into his mouth.

"Do go for a surgeon, Thomas," said I, "and let us try to save this unhappy man."

"But, if when he comes to himself again, Sir, he should insult you before the surgeon, which he is quite capable of doing, if only speech is granted him?"

"No; the loss of blood will have brought him to his senses, and he will say nothing offensive."

"Well, Sir, your orders shall be obeyed; but for God's sake, Sir, and for your own, and your child's sake, get rid of this man; for be assured, he will bring disgrace on you and your house, and set all your servants talking disrespectfully of you; and no honest man will remain in your service, while he is in it."

So saying, Thomas left the room, and hurried off in search of a surgeon, while I bathed the forehead of Figgins with cold water, and endeavoured to restore him to consciousness. At length, he heaved a deep sigh, opened his eyes, and looked at me.

"Where am I!" exclaimed he; and then seeing the blood, which had stained his clothes, he shuddered, and inquired what had occurred to him. "I have been struck, and half murdered," said he; "I see it all now. You wanted to get rid of me, that your secret might be safe."

"Unhappy man," replied I, "your own intemperance has been the sole cause of the state in which you find yourself. After insulting me grossly, you wanted to strike Thomas for no just cause, and in aiming a blow at him you lost your equilibrium, and in falling hit your head against the leg of the table."

"I don't believe a word of it," observed the obtuse wretch. "I'm quite sure you did it, or got that rascal Thomas to strike me, when I could not defend myself, but I'll have my revenge."

At this moment the surgeon arrived with Thomas; and Figgins, with dogged sulkiness, allowed his head to be examined. The wound was found to be deep, and the loss of blood occasioned great weakness. Figgins was removed to his room, where being placed in bed, the surgeon dressed the wound, and offered to send a nurse to attend on his patient.

"He has very narrowly escaped being killed; a half an inch more to the right would have been fatal, and as it is, I am not prepared to pronounce that he will recover," said he; "he is

evidently a man of intemperate habits, and a wound like this is much more dangerous with such, than with a sober person. I rather suspect a concussion of the brain, from the lethargic appearance of the patient, and the dilation of the pupils of the eyes."

I requested the surgeon to visit Figgins as frequently as he considered it necessary; and he promised to return again in a few hours.

When he had left the house, Thomas said to me, "Pray, Sir, allow me to say a few words to you. This bad man is now reduced to a state that will, in all human probability, detain him in his bed for many weeks. Why should you not take this opportunity of leaving Malta, he being unable to obstruct your departure, or to follow you, for some time at least."

I felt my face flush at this open avowal, that Thomas was aware that I was in Figgins's power, and that it was desirable I should escape from him. To what a position was I reduced! And how was my pride, that besetting sin of my nature, humbled! I wished to make some attempt to disprove the justice of Thomas's opinion, but I had not nerve enough to do so. I felt that I could not deceive him, that he had drawn unerring conclusions from all that he had seen and heard, and that I could not blind him. Yet the suggestion he had given me of leaving Malta, made such an impression on my mind, that I wondered it had not occurred to me. Yes, this was the time to leave Malta. I remembered with satisfaction that Figgins hardly dared go to England, since there it was that he had committed the crime known to his two companions, Motcombe and Bradstock, and for which an innocent person had been punished.

How strange that it had not previously occurred to me that my best chance of escape from him would be to go to England! But *the truth was, I had for some time almost lost the power of coolly calculating the most advisable step to adopt, and constantly kept*


in terror by Figgins, I deferred from day to day coming to a decision, which the conduct of this wayward and impracticable man might render abortive. — Yes, Thomas was right, this was the moment to go to England, and I would the next day, by which a packet was expected to arrive, give out that it brought me letters requiring my immediate presence at home.

The packet arrived that very evening. I went to the post-office myself, returned to my house, and announced that by a packet which would sail the next day, I would leave Malta. I ordered every necessary preparation to be made, and desired the nurse to hold herself in readiness to embark.

To my utter astonishment, however, she declared her intention of not leaving Malta until Figgins was recovered. She stated that she had been affianced to him ever since we were at Nice, and that to leave him under present circumstances was out of the question.

And this woman had been the nurse of my child from her birth, and had been treated with the utmost indulgence and kindness ever since she entered my service. She had always professed to love my daughter fondly, and the little girl was warmly attached to her. — Yet she could abandon her charge at such a moment, and for the sake of one of the most worthless and unprincipled men on earth. I sent for her, reasoned, advised, and argued with her, but in vain. Figgins had so completely succeeded in wholly blinding her, alike to her duty and interest, that all argument was useless. The foolish and selfish woman believed that her services could not be dispensed with, and that it being impossible for my daughter to undertake a voyage without a female attendant, I should be compelled to postpone my departure.

Thomas, however, came to my relief in this dilemma. He had some time before heard of an Englishwoman who had lost her mistress, the wife of the Colonel of a regiment stationed there,



and who desired to find some person returning to England, and requiring her services for the voyage. The widower would give her an excellent character, and she would be ready to embark on a short notice. This seemed the very thing, and I was delighted to be able to dispense with the ungrateful nurse.


Thomas went off to engage this woman, and I wrote to the Colonel to obtain her character, which proved perfectly satisfactory. I placed a sum of money at my banker's, to satisfy all demands likely to accrue from the illness of Figgins, and for his maintenance, arranging that the surgeon should continue his attendance while necessary; and I embarked the following morning for England, much pleased at observing that my daughter was quite reconciled to her new servant, and bore her separation from her old one much better than I had anticipated.

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## CHAPTER LVI.

OUR voyage was a prosperous one. My daughter bore it well, and before its termination I had ascertained that her new attendant merited the high character I had received of her, so assiduous and unceasing were her attentions to her youthful charge; who, in return, evinced great fondness for her. My resolution to come to England had been so suddenly adopted, that I had no time to form any plans relative to where I should settle when I arrived there. My first wish was to see Mrs. Neville, in order that my child should have the advantage of her protection—for I already felt that a father, however fondly attached to a daughter, cannot supply the place of a judicious and affectionate female friend. How had I been deceived in the nurse, who I believed to be so entirely devoted to the child, that nothing could induce her to leave her; yet, who deserted her charge for the sake of the worthless Figgins. I pondered over the future during the voyage, but it was for my daughter, not for me, that I formed projects.

Once more I touched the shore of England, but the joy felt by others on returning to their native land was not experienced by me. I returned to it even more gloomy, more hopeless, than when I left it; for then my beloved, my ever lamented Louisa was in life, and although in very delicate health I hoped that a milder clime might restore her, and prolong her existence for many years to come, to bless and comfort me — I came back without her, leaving her dear remains in a foreign grave. I again gazed on the shore we had both watched from the deck, as it receded from our sight, but I now looked on it alone, no fond arm pressed mine as





then, no sweet voice whispered that "with me all countries would be welcome to her." How well I remembered even the slightest incidents of that brief voyage, and what a flood of tenderness rushed through my heart as they were recalled!

I had no friend to greet my return to my native land. Any kindness I might experience from Mrs. Neville, I felt assured I should be indebted for solely to her memory of the affection entertained for me by the dear departed, and commiseration for my lonely state; and how poor a consolation was this mere tolerance for that exquisite tenderness I had been wont in other and happier times to meet from my matchless, my blessed Louisa! The heart, ever disposed to seek affection, never feels the want of it so deeply, as when after a long absence, one returns to the land of one's birth. — There it is so natural to look for it, that its deprivation is felt with increased bitterness; and as I reflected that no heart would beat quicker at my approach, no hand be stretched out gladly to meet mine, I drew my daughter closer to my side, and felt that she was now the sole tie that bound me to life, the sole object from which I could hope for affection. — But the love of children who could count on? Had not my daughter appeared to love her nurse fondly, yet how soon was she forgotten? How then could I hope that if separated from her, I should be remembered as tenderly as my heart yearned I should be? And as these reflections passed through my jealous mind, I animadverted with dissatisfaction on a circumstance that had previously greatly gratified me — namely the readiness with which my daughter had parted from her nurse, and the rapidity with which she had forgotten her. By what a different standard do we judge the conduct of those dear to us, to others, to that by which we regard it when the possibility of its ever coming home to ourselves presents itself.

*I took my daughter by the hand, and was leaving the Point at Portsmouth to proceed to the inn, when my name was called*

aloud. A few minutes previously I had been moodily reflecting on my isolated state. It then appeared a cause for additional gloom that no friendly voice would hail me, no amicable hand be stretched forth to clasp mine as I once more touched my native land. Yet now that I heard my name pronounced, the sound of recognition, far from giving me pleasure, grated harshly on my ear, and could I have avoided meeting the individual who uttered it, though ignorant who it might be, I would have done so.

"Mr. Herbert, my dear Mr. Herbert, how glad I am to see you," said the voice, and in a moment after I felt my hand grasped by that of Mrs. Scuddamore, who, more robust and rubicund than ever, uttered a torrent of congratulation on my return to England, of expressions of pleasure at being on the spot to welcome me, and of condolences at the severe loss I had experienced.

"I read the melancholy event in the newspapers," continued she. "I was quite prepared for it, for poor Mrs. Herbert looked the picture of ill health; and when a woman has a bad constitution, what can be expected? The longer she lived, the more you would have suffered, for let me tell you that few things in life are more trying than to watch a candle a long time going out, for such is the illness of a consumptive woman."

Oh! how I loathed this unfeeling creature!

"But let me not detain you. Let us walk to the inn. We positively must dine together, and talk over old times. I am at the George."

"I am going to the Crown," said I, anxious to avoid her.

"Not a single room to be had in it," observed she. "I tried to get lodged there, but the house is full, so you can't help yourself. I arrived at Portsmouth last night to meet an old brother officer whom I expected from Malta — Major McCulloch, an excellent soldier — a *leetle* bit of a martinet *entre nous*, but that's a *fault on the right side*. He's coming over on leave, to take

possession of a little fortune left him in Scotland by a distant relative. He also expects a step in his promotion. I can't understand what has prevented his coming in the same packet with you. He wrote to me that he would, if possible, sail by the next that would leave Malta. I was so sure that he would come, that I engaged a room for him at the George, which you can have, and ordered dinner for two, which you can share, and save me expense, without costing you any more than you would otherwise pay."

How I groaned in spirit as I heard her coolly arrange my movements without ever consulting my wishes on the subject.

"I think I will at once proceed to London," said I, anxious to get rid of her.

"What, and expose your little girl, who looks so delicate, to such fatigue on coming off a long voyage?" said she. "It would be perfect madness, my dear Mr. Herbert; nay, more, perfect cruelty. No, no, you must give her and yourself too, some repose — you positively must."

And now for the first time she looked at my daughter, and with much the same glance with which a drill-serjeant examines a raw recruit, who has just joined his regiment, or a horse-dealer inspects a new purchase.

"A pretty child, upon my word, a very pretty child!" observed she; "but looks very delicate, like her poor mother. Requires care — great care. Asses' milk, the constant use of dumb-bells, to expand her chest, and some months' drilling, under a good soldier, would do her a world of good. I have just a man in my eye for this: an old soldier of my regiment, now a pensioner in Chelsea Hospital. He has got the rheumatism so badly, that he is often months without being able to move; but when he *can* walk, I know no man so good for drilling young people, and setting them up."

*All the time she was carrying on this monologue, I was con-*

sidering how I could escape from her. I knew it would be no easy task, but her society was so insupportable to me, that I was most desirous to get rid of it. She, however, had taken possession of my arm, and relinquished it not until we reached the inn.

I had some difficulty in procuring a chamber for my daughter and her attendant, for the inn was, as Mrs. Scuddamore had represented, nearly full. That lady, always fertile in resources for emergencies, proposed a *shake-down*, as she termed it, for Miss Herbert, in her room, and a stretcher for her maid.

"I have been too long accustomed to rough it in campaigns abroad and at home, to be disposed to make difficulties, and could sleep as well on three chairs joined together, ay, or even on the ground, as in a regular bed," said the Amazon, much to the surprise, if not the admiration, of the hostess of the inn, who gazed at her with undisguised wonder.

I remained in my own room with my little girl, until summoned to dinner by the waiter. I found Mrs. Scuddamore already seated; and, like an old soldier, as she professed and prided herself to be, examining the wine, and smelling the soup.

"I have my doubts," observed she, "about that soup being made of fresh meat; or, if made of fresh meat, it has certainly been re-heated, a thing I can't bear."

The waiter, more than half-offended, declared that such things never occurred in the establishment to which he belonged, and eyed Mrs. Scuddamore with peculiar suspicion during the rest of the repast.

"This is a quality of beef that my dear departed Colonel Scuddamore never would have tolerated. No, he carefully examined the meat furnished for the soldier's rations, allowed no peculation, no private understanding between the quartermaster and the contractor. 'My soldiers,' he used to say, 'must have the best, and *only* the best meat;' and he made it a point to taste their soup, and other food. Ah! he was a model of

commanding officers: and I if am better acquainted than other women are with many useful things — I owe it wholly to him.”

Dinner over, and the waiter withdrawn, Mrs. Scuddamore, with that absence of feeling and tact which was peculiar to her, inquired into the particulars of my poor wife's illness and death; but I declined entering into them, on the plea that the wounds were too recent to be touched, without a degree of pain that I was unable to encounter.

“Strange!” observed she. “Now, when I lost Colonel Scuddamore, it afforded me the greatest comfort to speak about him. But this, I suppose, originated in my having been so accustomed to see the killed and wounded *en masse*, when I accompanied my husband on foreign service, that I was used to death. Nothing gives courage so much as witnessing such scenes. And now tell me, did you know Major McCulloch, at Malta?”

I replied in the negative.

“Then you had a great loss,” observed she. “He is a capital soldier, and no wonder, for he served many years under the command of Colonel Scuddamore. I will be confidential with you, Mr. Herbert, the Major will become my husband as soon as he gets his Lieut.-Colonelcy. He proposed for my hand the year after I lost the Colonel; but I told him, that to marry any officer of an inferior grade in the army to that which my former husband bore, was out of the question. He then extorted a promise, that when he received his promotion, I should become his. I wanted to wait till he became a full Colonel, but he said, that as neither of us were young, and both had seen a great deal of hard foreign service, it would be folly to wait for so long a period, so I yielded, though I do think it rather *infra dig.* for me to lose rank by becoming the wife of a Lieut.-Colonel, after *having so long been* the wife of a full one. The Major says, ‘Where should we find persons to suit either of us so well as

each other. We have seen the same countries, been engaged in the same scenes; we both revere the memory of the gallant Colonel Scuddamore. You know *me* to be a brave soldier, and I know you to be the very best soldier's wife I ever met. Our winter evenings will pass rapidly talking over old times, by our fire-side, and our incomes joined will secure us the comforts of life.' What could be urged against such a rational project? Now, Mr. Herbert, that I have told you my plans, do, pray, let me know yours? You are come home, I conclude, to marry Mrs. Neville, the widow of poor Neville. I heard you had both arranged this affair at Nice, when you lost your wife, and she her husband."

"Then you were greatly misinformed," observed I, red with anger. "Mrs. Neville was in too great affliction for the loss of a husband she fondly loved, to admit of so preposterous, so indelicate and so indecorous a proceeding; and as for me, I should hate and despise myself, were I capable of such conduct."

"So, then, you are *not* engaged."

"Certainly not; and if I know myself, I never will give a successor to her whose loss I must ever deplore."

"But, my dear Mr. Herbert, you are still a young man. It would be madness at your age to remain single! I have not yet told you, that your old flame, my niece, Mrs. Mordaunt, is become a widow. Yes, positively she is free, and has inherited a very pretty property from her late husband. Poor fellow, you would never, I am sure, guess how he met his death? He was killed in a duel — shot through the breast. I knew him to be so deficient in courage, that when I was told a ball was lodged in his body, I said, he must have swallowed it then, for he never would have stood to be fired at. But he did though for all that, for his wife, who has a little of my notions of honour, insisted on his going out with a gentleman, whose wife had, she said,

insulted her ; but who I really believe, *she* had insulted, for the husband of the other lady challenged Mordaunt, and he wanted to make an apology, as he was always ready to do, and she would not let him. Yes, Mrs. Mordaunt would make you an excellent wife, for her income is good, she is full of gaiety, and never out of spirits. You were once desperately in love with her, and you know the old song,

‘ On en revient toujours  
A ses premiers amours.’ ”

Though little inclined to mirth, heaven knows, I could not forbear smiling at the earnestness with which Mrs. Scuddamore recommended me to marry her niece, and the *naïveté* with which she revealed that to her, the unfortunate Mordaunt owed his death.

There was something so ludicrous in such a recommendation, that I could not forbear laughing, but Mrs. Scuddamore saw nothing risible in the affair, and thought her niece had acted perfectly right in compelling her husband to fight, even though his death was the result.

Having exhausted her military intelligence, the fruit of a constant and sedulous perusal of the Army List, Gazette of promotions, exchanges, and obituaries of the last few months, I wished her good night, having given a very vague answer to her proposal of breakfasting together next morning. I arranged to depart for London at a very early hour, and having paid the bill of our dinner and tea, and left a few lines of farewell for her, giving no clue to my address in town, I sought my pillow, leaving instructions to be called at daybreak.

I got away from Portsmouth long before Mrs. Scuddamore was awake, rejoiced to have escaped from so troublesome an *acquaintance*, and determined to avoid her and her odious niece *by every means in my power*.

I entered London once more, but under what altered circumstances! I took apartments at Moffat's Hotel, in Brookstreet, desiring to be as near Mrs. Neville's house as possible; and having seen my daughter and her attendant installed in their rooms, I hurried off to inquire if Mrs. Neville was in town.

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## CHAPTER LVII.

I FOUND Mrs. Neville at home, and although the first sight of me brought tears to her eyes, by recalling the sad events at Nice to her mind, her reception of me was kind, nay more, cordial. Her daughter was with her, and a more interesting and intelligent looking child I had never seen. Strikingly like my poor friend Neville, I could not look at her without being reminded of him. Though still pale and delicate, Mrs. Neville had recovered a portion of the beauty and attraction which had won my dear lost Louisa's admiration when first they met. Sorrow had given a more serious character to her countenance than it wore when I first beheld her, but all the feminine softness, and touching grace peculiar to it, still existed; and whatever she might have lost in brilliancy and vivacity, she had gained in mildness and increased gentleness. One could not gaze on that pale but still lovely face, or that fragile figure, without feeling that long sorrow had wrought the change visible in her, and an increased sympathy, and deeper interest, was excited for her. When she learned that my daughter was at an hotel, she pressed me so cordially to permit her and her attendant to take up their abode with her, that although I hesitated to part from my child, even for a short time, I could not decline.

"You can come and see your little girl as often as you like," said Mrs. Neville, "and as I have generally a few intimate friends and relations who drop in to spend the evenings with me, it will give me pleasure if you join my quiet circle when you have *nothing better to do.*"

*Grateful for this kindness, invaluable to one like me, who*

had no friends or acquaintances to welcome me, gladly did I promise to avail myself of it. Hitherto my eyes had been wholly occupied in looking at Mrs. Neville and her interesting daughter.

As I glanced at the pensive but beautiful face of the beloved friend of my adored wife how many sorrowful thoughts were recalled to my mind. My poor Louisa seemed again to rise up before me, my dear, my only friend, Neville, seemed to live again, so closely associated were these dear lost ones with her who was now present.

Something of this feeling was also experienced by Mrs. Neville, for I saw tears start to her eyes frequently while we conversed, and the tremulous movement of her lips betrayed her emotion. I noticed too that she more than once turned her eyes to the side of the room where I was seated, and when I arose to depart I glanced at the wall. Upon it were suspended two portraits, so strikingly resembling my beloved Louisa, and poor Neville, that I could not for several minutes withdraw my gaze from them, though tears almost blinded me.

"I ought to have prepared you for this surprise," said Mrs. Neville, "but I was afraid to trust myself to speak. The faces of both were so deeply engraved on my heart and memory, that I was enabled to make these portraits, which are constantly before my eyes. They were painted *con amore*, and constitute one of my greatest consolations."

It was some time before I could recover my self-possession, so deeply affected was I by these pictures, and my emotion was the truest homage I could offer to her who had produced them.

Mrs. Neville sent her carriage to the hotel for my daughter and her attendant, and I took my leave of her, promising to join her in the evening, and hastened to give instructions to have the wardrobe of my little girl removed to Brookstreet, filled with

gratitude that she had so kind, so judicious a friend, under whose protection she could be placed.

My next visit was to my old friend Vise, but a brass plate with another name than his, informed me that he no longer inhabited his old place of abode — I knocked, and was admitted, and in answer to my inquiries, was informed that Vise had been dead some time. Poor fellow! how my neglect and long silence towards him now smote my conscience. He, who had from the first moment of our acquaintance been so invariably kind, and friendly, and had taken such a warm interest in my affairs. I knew not until this moment how much I liked poor Vise, and now, it was too late to prove to him that I was not ungrateful. He must have died thinking me so, and this reflection pained me.

“Should you wish to see his executors, the address can be given you,” said to person who had answered my inquiries. “It has been left here in case it should be asked for.”

I took the address, and hurried from the house, where no longer, as heretofore, I had a friend.

I had arrived at no very advanced period of life, yet how had I seen the few dear to me, or to whom I was dear, snatched away from existence. On whom could I now count in my native land for friendship, or good will? On no one save Mrs. Neville, and she, I felt fully conscious, was only interested for me out of regard to the memory of those dear to her who had loved me. This feeling of isolation, always peculiar to a solitary man, came stronger on me than ever, and I almost repented having resigned my daughter, though even but for a temporary period, to any care but my own. Under my own roof I could seek her presence when I pleased, could lose the depressing sense of my loneliness in her fond caresses, and artless prattle. Now I should have to *look for her in the house of another's, should be compelled to consult the convenience of those with whom she was domiciled for*

the time of our interview, and its duration — perhaps have witnesses to it, before whom I could not give way to that expansion of heart, that doting tenderness, of which she was the sole object. I could not, as I had been wont to do, bend over her little couch to bless her slumbers, or receive her kiss when she awoke. Now that I had, by my own consent, parted from my darling, I seemed to require her presence more than ever, and shame alone prevented my going to Mrs. Neville's and revealing my weakness, and reclaiming back my little Frances.

To chase away these thoughts, I walked to Mr. Goldey's, one of the executors of poor Vise. I found him at home, and on sending in my card, I was admitted to his office.

"I have heard my poor deceased friend often speak of you, Sir," said he, looking at me through his spectacles. "He was snatched away very suddenly, and in the prime of life I may say. Not above four or five years older than I am." The speaker looked to be at least twelve years the senior of my poor friend.

"Of all tenures, Sir, and as a lawyer I am conversant on such matters, none are so precarious as that of life. There are so many flaws in the title, Sir, so many clauses of forfeiture, that no man can count on a peaceable or long possession."

The air of self-complacency with which Mr. Goldey uttered these truisms, might have amused me under other circumstances but, now that I was saddened by the loss of poor Vise, I was more disposed to be impatient than diverted by his pompously uttered common-places.

"Death, Sir," resumed he, "is of all creditors the most stern, and unbending. He claims, ay, and compels, too, payment of the debts due to him, even from those who never discharged any other. Not that our late respected friend Vise, was one of those who neglect their worldly affairs, for there was *no man more just in his dealings, or more punctual in the pay-*

ment of his debts. Never was sued in his life, until the king of Terror, as poets term him, brought his action, without serving him with due notice, got a verdict against him and carried him off. — Poor Vise did not, however, forget his old friends. He has remembered you, Sir, handsomely in his will, which has been properly administered to; and when your identity is satisfactorily proved, you can receive your legacy, amounting to no less a sum than five thousand pounds, as well as different articles belonging to you confided to his trust, each, and all of which he took especial care should be labelled, and a regular list of them made out, in order to prevent the possibility of mistake or litigation.”

I inquired the particulars of my poor friend's illness, and the precise time of his death?

“The doctors differed, as they generally do, as to his disease. One asserted it was of the liver; another, said it was dyspepsia; a third, declared it was ossification of the heart; and the fourth, insisted that it was an affection of the lungs. The only point on which all agreed, was, — that each had applied precisely the wrong treatment, — so poor Vise's friends had the annoyance, in addition to their regret, of thinking that he might have been saved, had he been differently treated. If a poor, unfortunate patient is in danger with *one* doctor, I leave you to imagine, Sir, how little must his chance be with four. From the beginning, I saw it was all up with him, and the result but too well justified my fears. Death, at all times a disagreeable thing, becomes much more so when it carries off our contemporaries; and though poor Vise was five years, at least, older than me, nevertheless I might, in some sort, consider him a contemporary; and his death alarmed me considerably. Such events come as warnings to us, Sir; and never do I lose a friend, or does a misfortune *occur to one, without my thinking that it might have happened to myself; and the satisfaction experienced that it has not, greatly*

mitigates the regret felt for others. Indeed, a sensible man may reconcile his feelings to every affliction that befalls *others*, by reflecting that such might be his own lot; and *his* escape soothes all sorrow."

I left this selfish being, thoroughly disgusted with him, while he, I verily believe, imagined that he had exhibited a degree of good sense and philosophy, that must have made a most favourable impression on my mind.

How strange and incomprehensible is the mind of man! I had been months — nay, more — years, without ever bestowing a single thought on him whose death had been that day announced to me; and, had I remained abroad, I should probably have continued equally oblivious of him; and now — I could think of nothing else! I recalled his various acts of kindness and good nature to me — the expression of his countenance on these occasions — the tones of his voice and puerile details of his person and dress, as vividly as if I had seen him only the previous day. The proof that, however I had forgotten him, *he* had not ceased to remember me with affection, awakened a sentiment of strong self-reproach in my heart; and the regret I now experienced, caused me to reflect, that there was something in my nature, if not in that of all mankind, that disposed me much more to painful, than pleasurable emotions, since he whom living, I seldom, if ever, bestowed a thought on, now when dead, gave me regret.

When walking back to my hotel, the crowds in the streets, the hurrying to and fro, the noise, the bustle, the air of deep occupation of all those I encountered, struck me with as much surprise as if I had never previously beheld this scene. — How different from the comparatively deserted streets of the continental towns, in which life and its business seemed to stagnate!

"*Here*," thought I, "a man might long escape being found,

and the thought of Figgins pursuing me flashed through my mind. "Here an obscure individual, of more than suspected character, would long pause before he dared to prefer an unsupported charge of criminality against a person known to be of respectable station in society." And a feeling of security nerved my frame, long unknown to it. I fancied that in busy, crowded London, with its active police ever within call, my tormentor would be afraid to assail me. That a charge of conspiracy might enable me to get rid of him, should he presume to follow and attack me, and, let me also add, a consciousness that my pecuniary independence would greatly befriend me against any charge brought by an impoverished man of his class, added to my newly acquired courage — Figgins in London and on the continent were two different persons. In a foreign land he stood a better chance of frightening me to his wishes, because there I had less protection against his nefarious schemes than at home. And as these thoughts passed through my mind, it occurred to me that I ought to go to my property in Wales, and take steps to guard against any future attempt on his part to bring testimony of the crime of which he supposed me to be guilty.

Yes, painful as the effort would be, I would go to Wales, to that spot where, notwithstanding the one terrible event that had obscured the sunshine of my life, I had enjoyed some hours of as exquisite happiness as was ever vouchsafed to mortal! But now, *she* who had bestowed this bliss was sleeping in her distant grave; and I must enter the abode once graced by her presence, every room in which must remind me of her — must make me feel more poignantly the loss of that happiness I must never more hope to find. How impressionable is the human mind! How many thoughts had passed through mine during the few hours that had elapsed since my arrival in London! They had been so *various and exciting*, that days, nay, weeks, seemed to have *glided away, instead of hours*, since I left my hotel; and, morally

and physically fatigued, I threw myself into a chair, and closed my eyes, as if to shut out thought.

I was aroused from my reverie by the announcement that my solitary dinner was served; and having slightly partaken of it, I dressed for my evening visit to Mrs. Neville, and proceeded to her house.

She had considerably given instructions that I should be shown to the sitting-room assigned to her daughter's use, where I found my sweet Frances waiting, with her attendant, to receive me. The dear child rushed into my arms, and fondly embracing me, exclaimed, "Oh! dear, good papa, how kind of you to let me come here, where I am so happy with dear Matilda Neville to play with; and her mamma, who is so fond of me. Won't you leave me with them, dear papa, and come and see me every day?"

I felt a chill strike at my heart at this artless address of my daughter's. Was this, then, the reward of that doting affection I had lavished on her, for the pang it had cost me to part from her, for even a short time? Already was her new play-mate preferred to me; and her first words to me on meeting, were to prefer a request to be left with her new friends! Stunned and pained, I disengaged myself gently from her embrace. I felt disappointed, grieved — here, where I had garnered up all my affection, all my hopes, I was doomed to find only disappointment, and I mentally accused my child of ingratitude and selfishness, when the unsophisticated little creature was only following the dictates of nature in revealing the pleasure she experienced at finding herself, for the first time, with a playmate of her own age, to enjoy her sports. It was I who was selfish and unreasonable; but so I ever was, allowing my morbid feelings to govern me.

After passing an hour with my daughter — an hour that, instead of being one of pure pleasure, was poisoned by the thought of her preferring her new friends to me, I joined Mrs. *Neville's circle* in the drawing-room. It was composed, for the



greater part, of near relatives, and a few intimate friends, to whom I was presented. The conversation proved that the visitors were intellectual and accomplished; yet, it was wholly free from the pretension and desire to shine, which but too frequently impair, if not destroy, the agreeability of such society. Mrs. Neville formed the focus around which this circle moved, and though no longer playful, animated and brilliant, as when I first knew her, the seriousness, if not pensiveness of her manner, free from all moroseness, or misanthropy, invested her with a new charm.

I took an opportunity of informing her of my intention of departing for Wales next day, and she so earnestly requested me to leave my daughter with her, that I consented.

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## CHAPTER LVIII.

I LEFT London at an early hour in the morning, taking no servant with me; and in the post-chaise which conveyed me on my route, had ample time for reflection. I remembered, now for the first time, that the bequest of my late friend Vise, would not only prevent the fortune of my daughter being impaired by the sums I had given, or might yet be called on to give to Figgins, but add considerably to her portion; and although, heaven knows, never fond of money, this thought pleased me, for aught that could tend to make *her* lot in life a more fortunate one, was regarded by me with an interest, that nothing appertaining exclusively to my self could awaken. — I lived but for my child. The present — the future — were contemplated solely with a reference to her welfare; and if I trembled in an agony of terror, at the possibility of my name being disgraced by a charge preferred against me by Figgins, it was because *she* bore that name, and that a charge of guilt against me would entail discredit on her.

Knowing my perfect freedom from guilt, my conscience no longer inflicted pain on me. Time and reflection had soothed the torture endured during the first year after the fatal event that had blighted my existence, and when death had snatched my beloved Louisa from me, whose peace would have been inevitably destroyed for ever by the disclosure that I had been, even unintentionally, accessory to her sister's death; I no longer dreaded with such intense horror, the chance of discovery, as when the blow might have crushed her. But then came the thought that *my daughter's prospects* might be ruined; and again I was a

trembling coward, ready to make any sacrifice to preserve the name *she* bore from dishonour.

Every mile that took me further from my child seemed to increase the overflowing tenderness I felt for her; and as I gazed on the lofty mountains that rose up between us, I wondered how I had found courage to leave her, and was ready to exclaim with Goldsmith, the poet, —

“Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,  
My heart untravell'd fondly turns to thee;  
Still to my *daughter* turns, with endless pain,  
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain.”

He who has never experienced misfortune, and, above all other misfortunes, that of having lost the object of his most tender love, can form no idea of the disgust of life with which he turns from the syren, Hope, who would again cheat him with smiling prospects for the future. For *himself* he expects not — he seeks not happiness again. He knows it is buried with her who once constituted it; and he desires not, even were it possible to find it, through any other medium. But when he is a father — when a child of her he loved is bequeathed to him — the happiness to which he no longer aspires for himself, he would fain transfer to his, to *her* offspring, and losing his selfishness, his very identity, as it were, in the all-engrossing interest awakened for her child, he would gladly purchase its exemption from the ills of life at the price of his own misery.

How often did my memory recur to the last time I traversed the route I was now pursuing. I was then hastening to my mother, in the hope to receive that blessing, which, alas! I was doomed never more to hear her dear lips pronounce. — I was then wretched, as the bare possibility of arriving too late presented *itself*, and I looked on that as the utmost misfortune that could *befall me*.

I little dreamed, that, heavy as that must be, a still heavier one menaced me, and I hurried on to my fate, thoughtless as victims approach the altar of sacrifice.

Now I was journeying to the same goal — alone, as then — but with a heart still bleeding for one I had never seen when I had previously traced this route. How widely different is the solitude of one bereaved of the object which made the charm — the *all* — of life, and that of him who has yet to learn the blessing of having found this object? Now an aching void was left in my heart, never more to be filled; and the grief I felt was in proportion to the difference which the actual present bore to the happy past. — It seemed wondrous to me how I had supported existence before I knew my Louisa, so wholly had she changed its entire current; and yet it was surely more wonderful how, after having been blest with her, I could drag on life when she was no more!

I reached my now desolate home, at a late hour of the third evening from my departure from London. The post which brought the letter, announcing my return, had arrived some hours before, and my humble, but faithful friend, Mrs. Burnet, had made some preparations for my reception. — A bright fire, a clean hearth, and lighted candles, took off from the gloom that always pervades a long-deserted abode; but alas! the light only showed me the serious, but lovely face, of my departed wife's sister, which might be mistaken for the portrait of my lost Louisa, so striking was its resemblance to her. It made me shudder; and yet I could not withdraw my eyes from it.

I attempted to taste the light supper prepared by Mrs. Burnet, who pressed me so anxiously to eat a few morsels; but I could not swallow, and it was only after having drank a glass of wine that I could answer her affectionate inquiries for my daughter, so wholly was I overpowered by the agonizing feelings awakened by the sight of the objects around me. — There was my lost

Louisa's chair, and the footstool on which I had so often seen her delicate feet resting. Her work-table and tambour-frame were still in the places where she had been wont to use them; one of her favourite volumes, with a rose between the leaves, still lay on a small table near her chair, and a pair of her gloves was beside it. How did I press these mementoes of happier times to my lips, and bathe them in my tears, as the thought that she whose presence had been the only sunshine that had ever cheered my gloomy existence, was now slumbering in her distant grave, between which and me a wide sea rolled. It seemed but a short time since I had left the spot I now found myself in, bearing with me my beautiful, my adored companion, blooming in youth and health, or, if the rose had paled on her fair cheek, it was from her tender solicitude for me. Yet, oh! how much sorrow and agony had I endured since that period. — How many days of wretchedness and sleepless nights! Every thing around me seemed so exactly like what had been before I left my home, that I could hardly reason myself into the conviction that *she* was gone for ever. There were moments that I indulged the illusion that she might have gone to her chamber, and that when the door which led to it opened, she would enter! Then came back the terrible truth, and that I could even for a moment have doubted it, filled me with dread that I must be losing my reason, to have had such hallucinations.

Mrs. Burnet spoke not of my lost wife, although I saw by her mournful countenance that her thoughts were with the dead. I was grateful for this forbearance, for I could not have borne to have talked on the subject that occupied all my thoughts. To turn me from bitter memories, Mrs. Burnet reverted to other topics.

*"There was a strange man came here, Sir," said she, "who said he had lived in your service at Nice."*

I became all ear, though trembling with emotion, as I listened to this preface.

"I really think he was not right in his head," resumed the good woman, "for he did nothing but ask the strangest questions, and all about one subject, which was whether any lady had ever been thrown down from a precipice in our neighbourhood; who had been suspected of the crime, and whether the body was ever found, and where buried? I lost all patience at his minute inquiries, and then he went round to all the neighbours, questioning them. And when he heard how poor Miss Maitland had been so long missing, he seemed quite pleased, which showed he must be crazy to be glad of such a misfortune; and after, when he learned that the corpse had been found in the river, and had been buried in the vault in the church, he seemed quite sorry, and wanted to know whether it had been identified by those who knew the deceased, and whether any marks of violence had been discovered on it.

"I don't know whether I ought to repeat this low man's words to you, Sir," continued Mrs. Burnet; "but would you believe it, Sir, he had the impudence and wickedness to ask, if you, yes, Sir, positively you, had never been suspected of throwing the young lady down the precipice? This made the persons to whom he spoke, so angry, that they would hold no further talk with him; and, afterwards, he brought a spade and mattock, and went digging up the ground about the precipice, for several days, — some say, in hopes of finding buried treasure. He, at last, went away, and we have heard no more of him, ever since; but I am sure he was mad."

My feelings while Mrs. Burnet related all this tale to me cannot be described. Terror, and horror, predominated! To hear a subject discussed, which I never could even think of, without shuddering, tortured me almost beyond the power of endurance, and yet I felt the necessity of concealing, though I could

not vanquish my deep emotion. The effort nearly convulsed me; but Mrs. Burnet was no prying spy to watch whatever demonstrations of grief, or agitation, I might betray; and any symptoms of such that she might notice, she would naturally attribute to anger, and indignation caused by what she had narrated.

"To think, Sir," resumed she, "of a crazy fellow coming here to ask, whether you had not loved, and murdered a young lady, whom I and many others could prove, on oath, you never saw, till you beheld her in her coffin; for you may remember, Sir, she disappeared the very evening of my dear lady's funeral, when you were very ill in your bed; and many persons, as well as me, could prove you had never, since you returned to find your blessed mother no more, left this house, by day or night, except to attend her interment, until you were called from your sick-bed, to join in the search of poor Miss Maitland, the night she was first missed."

It was highly consolatory to me to find that Mrs. Burnet's memory was so accurate in every particular connected with the fatal night that had destroyed my peace. Her evidence, if ever required, would fully acquit me of any charge brought by the vile schemer Figgins; and corroborated as it could be by the neighbours who were cognisant of the facts she detailed, I felt that I had little to dread, even if denounced by the wretch who had taken such advantage of my terror.

I determined that I would once more visit the cavern, and ascertain whether the mortal remains of my poor sister-in-law still rested where I had interred them, or whether the statement of Figgins, that *he* had removed them, was founded in truth. I assumed as calm an aspect as I could, affected to believe with Mrs. Burnet, that the strange man of whom she spoke must be mad, and then pleading fatigue, retired to my bedroom — that *which had been my nuptial chamber!*

*There stood the toilet-table of my lost Louisa, her dressing-*

stool, and her easy-chair, with their delicate flounced coverings. The mirror with its lace draperies, the snowy pillows with their embroidered trimmings. In short, all that distinguishes the *chambre à coucher* of a woman from that of a man. The very atmosphere of the room was redolent of the mingled perfume of violets and vervaine, her favourite odours, which, contained in *sachets* of her own making, had been carefully preserved in the wardrobes and commodes by Mrs. Burnet, and still sent forth their scents. An Æolian harp, placed in a window of the adjoining dressing-room, occasionally breathed its unearthly sounds, as the night-breeze swept over its chords. How frequently had I listened to its fitful music, when she who placed it there was by my side! Now it seemed to breathe a requiem to her shade, every note thrilling my heart with sadness, until, unmanned, I flung myself into a chair, and lightened my tortured breast by an uncontrollable fit of tears. — I wept long, for the fountain of grief, once opened, could not be soon closed. I experienced a sense of relief from tears, and throwing myself on my couch, slept for some hours. When I awoke, I found that it was only a little after twelve o'clock. I had retired so early to my chamber that I could hardly believe that only so small a portion of the night had passed; and now finding that some hours of darkness might still be counted on, and that all was silent in the house, I arose, and determined on proceeding to the cavern, provided I could find a lantern and a spade.

With stealthy step I entered a small room not far distant from my bed-chamber, appropriated for the keeping of all objects not in daily requisition, and there I found the lantern formerly used, and having placed in it one of the candles of my chamber, and locked my room door inside, I opened a window, and stopt noiselessly into the garden; in the tool-house of which I found a spade, as I had expected. I had put some phosphoric matches in my pocket, to strike a light when required; and wrapping



myself in my cloak, I took the well-remembered path, and with a quick beating heart, hurried on to the cavern. — Not a human being did I meet, — not a sound, save that of the night birds, met my ear.

I entered the cavern, and lit the lantern with a trembling hand. I stooped down close to the earth, to examine whether any portion of its surface had been disturbed since I last saw it, and almost fell to the ground, when I beheld evident traces that it had.

Yes, some one *had* been digging here, and had taken so little pains to restore the former evenness of the surface, that the inequality was very perceptible — “Good God!” thought I, “the story told by Figgins was not untrue!” And yet the spot that had been dug up, was not precisely that in which I had placed the corpse. There was still a chance that he had not discovered the body, and this chance nerved my arm to apply the spade more vigorously to the closely bound soil, rendered harder by the amalgamation of earth and sand. Large drops of perspiration fell from my brow on the ground, as I worked through it for nearly two hours, when my spade met a different substance. Oh! how I trembled! and how rapidly did my heart beat! — I loosened the earth, and drew forth a portion of the matting which enveloped the corpse. Beneath it a fragment of the cloak I had wrapped around the dead was revealed, and having thrown out several spades-full of the soil, the form, shrouded in its covering of matting and cloak, met my eyes. I fell on my knees and breathed a prayer of thankfulness to the Almighty, for this little less than miraculous escape of the dead from the prying search of Figgins. He had opened the earth in more than two or three places, within a few feet of that spot which contained what he sought; but the precise one, was so *knit together as to offer strong evidence of never having been disturbed since I had closed it*, that I felt assured, he had not

dug it, while other spots disclosed that they had been disturbed. What was I next to do? I was so fearful of *not* finding the corpse, that I had not thought of what would be advisable to do with it until now. Although shuddering at the contact, I raised the corpse in my arms, and to my utter amazement found it so incredibly light, that at first it occurred to me that I held only its envelopes, and that the remains had been abstracted. That was a terrible moment! I laid down the light burthen on the earth, and trembling with the mingled emotions of anxiety and terror, I rapidly tore off a portion of the matting and cloak, when the interior drapery met my touch, and beneath it a skeleton-like form, to which no substance like flesh seemed to adhere. I dared not look on what had been the face — that face, whose rare and exquisite beauty had been kept fresh in my memory by the wonderful resemblance which that of my departed wife bore to it, and which still lived in my daughter! And yet it was necessary to ascertain that the remains were those which I had placed there! I held the open lantern close to the shrouded form, and with averted eyes, groped with one hand to remove sufficient of the cloak to reveal some part of the corpse, which I could turn to glance for a moment at, when uncovered, when the candle fell from the lantern, and before I was aware that it had done so, matting and cloak were in a blaze! Terrified, bewildered, I lost all self-control, all reason! I rushed wildly to the opening of the cavern to seek assistance, forgetting that none could be met with there; or, if a human being could be encountered, the discovery of my terrible secret must be the inevitable result.

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## CHAPTER LIX.

EVEN on the outside of the cavern I could hear the crackling of the flames, and see the bright reflection illuminating the sides of the rock at the entrance, and casting forth a stream of light to the spot where I stood. I wrung my hands in helpless, hopeless, despair. Could the dead feel the fire that encircled it in its embraces, raging more fiercely every moment, I could not have experienced a greater degree of terror and dismay than filled my breast then! The lurid flames streamed forth from the mouth of the cavern, falling on the sand and on the water like columns of molten gold. Oh! what would I not have given for some vessel to fill with water to throw on the fire, but I was powerless, and could only writhe in agony as the blaze mounted still higher.

Hardly conscious of what I did, I again entered the cavern, and gazed on the flames, when, Oh! horror! through them, as through a transparent vial, I could behold the face of the dead brightly tinted by their reflection; and, uttering a loud cry, I fell to the earth! How long I remained insensible I know not; but when consciousness was restored the fire was over, and the smouldering ashes still smoking, alone revealed what had occurred.

The first light of day-break now pierced the cavern. Oh! how dreary, how desolate, was its aspect, as only partially illuminated, the distant portions still remaining in deep shadow, while the pale light of day fell on the funeral pyre. Aroused to a *sense of danger*, I felt that these traces of some mysterious crime *must instantly be removed*. I collected the ashes of the matting

and drapery, which, alas? were mingled with those of the dead, and filling my cloak with them, although my hands recoiled with instinctive horror from the contact, I emptied the contents into the water, and saw them quickly hurried away, and dispersed by the rapidity of the current.

Having then shaken the cloak as carefully as I could, to remove every particle of the ashes from it, I placed in it the scorched skull, shorn of the beautiful tresses that had formerly graced that once lovely head, and the half-carbonized limbs, that could have betrayed them to have appertained to a human being. I then filled up the now empty grave, and by repeatedly stamping on it, and strewing dust over the surface, restored it to its former appearance.

Having enveloped the head, — the word makes me shudder even now, — and the bones into as small a parcel as I could, I hastily pursued my way to my house, like a criminal, glancing from side to side, lest some shepherd should be leading his flock from the fold, or some early milkmaid should be abroad to milk her cows. Every sound alarmed me, every shadow terrified. The carol of the birds to welcome morning, was, for the first time, distasteful to my ear, by reminding me of the advance of day, and that consequently others, like myself, might be abroad. My fears, however, were groundless: I met not a human being; and, having entered the window by which I had left my house, I placed my sacred burthen on a table, and gasping for breath, sank into a chair to recover my self-possession.

Grown more calm, I replaced the lantern where I had found it, took out a portion of the clothes contained in a large trunk I had brought with me, and removing from my cloak the deposit it had enveloped, I wrapped its contents in a large dressing-gown, which I placed in the trunk, taking care to secure the key in a secret drawer in my writing-case. I then removed every trace of

*soil from my cloak, brushed it, scraped my boots, and carefully*

washed my hands, emptying the contents of the basin into the garden, and then, unlocking my chamber-door, went to bed. But sleep refused to visit my couch, notwithstanding the intense sense of fatigue I experienced. The thought of the scene I had witnessed, and the recollection of the contents of the trunk in my room, prevented me from having even a few minutes' sleep, greatly as I required it; and when, at eight o'clock, I rang my bell for Mrs. Burnet, my pale face and haggard countenance alarmed the worthy creature so much, that I had some difficulty in preventing her from sending for Dr. Bellinden. Some strong coffee proved a stimulant that so greatly revived me, that Mrs.—'s alarm subsided.

"I was thinking, Sir," said she, "that it was very stupid of me not to have thought of opening your trunk, and arranging its contents in the drawers."

I trembled at the bare notion, but making an effort to conceal my agitation, I answered, "that as my stay would be only for a day, I would not have my trunk unpacked."

Seeing that she glanced at the trunk, whose size must have given her the idea, that for so short a visit it was unnecessary to bring so large a one, I said something about having intended to have stayed some time, but that I found the place reminded me too much of the past, and affected my feelings so powerfully, that I could not support a longer continuance there.

"I don't wonder at it, Sir," replied the worthy woman; "I thought you looking extremely ill last evening when you arrived, but you appeared so much worse this morning, when I first entered, that I really believe your health would suffer by a longer residence here." And she sighed deeply, and tears filled her eyes while she spoke.

I walked out after breakfast, and called on the good pastor of *our hamlet*. His reception of me was most kind and affectionate—*my altered appearance* had evidently touched him, for I saw

his eyes become moist more than once while he spoke to me. — He expressed a hope that I was come to make some stay, but, when I stated that I found I had not yet acquired sufficient strength of mind to support the sight of a place where I had once been so happy, he shook his head, and answered, “that he feared it.” I placed a sum of money in his hands, for the poor of his flock, and then proceeded to call on Dr. Bellinden. This son of Esculapius no sooner saw me than he held out his hand, not to shake mine as might be anticipated, but to feel my pulse.

“Good God! Sir, how ill you are looking,” exclaimed he.

“Yes, I have not been well of late,” and I endeavoured to withdraw my wrist from his grasp.

“Do you know that you ought to be in your bed, Sir, instead of walking about. You are ill, seriously ill, Mr. Herbert. Your pulse is up to one hundred and twenty, and hard and wiry. Not the least moisture on the skin. You should return home, and go to bed directly.”

I answered that it was only the fatigue occasioned by a rapid journey and want of sleep that had occasioned the symptoms he had remarked, and that, as I was called back to London immediately by business, I should not have time to lay up, and profit by his care and skill.

“Are you quite sure that you feel no uneasiness in the crico-arytenoideus lateralis?” demanded the doctor, still examining my countenance.

“Not the least,” replied I, wholly ignorant of the signification of the technical words he had uttered.

“Well, that is strange,” resumed he, “for you certainly appear to me to have some affection connected with the muscles of the glottis. Yet now, that I look more narrowly, I begin to think that you have a derangement of the levator labii superioris ulæque nasi. Yes, certainly, you have, and a very disagreeable and *troublesome* complaint it is, if not attended to at once.”

"I confess," answered I, that I do not know the sense of the words you have just pronounced, consequently cannot say whether I feel any symptoms of the malady or not."

"Ah!" and the doctor sighed deeply, "when will science, and above all, the science of anatomy and physic, be so generally diffused, that every educated person will be able to give an accurate description of his symptoms, and in the proper terms. Then there will be no mistakes in my profession — none of those fatal errors which originate, *not*, as is too frequently but falsely attributed in the want of skill in physicians, but in the want of accuracy in describing their complaints, so prevalent in patients. The levator labii superioris ulæque nasi, to simplify to the unlearned, I designate the sneering muscle, Mr. Herbert; and yours, I am persuaded, has an unnatural tension, for I have been looking at it the last ten minutes."

For once, the Doctor had guessed nearer the truth than usual; for, little disposed to smile, heaven knows, something like a sneer had involuntarily passed over the muscles of my lips, at his pedantry, and desire to take possession of me as a patient.

"Be assured, Mr. Herbert," resumed the Doctor, "that Pope never wrote a truer or a more philosophical line than that which says —

'The proper study of mankind is man.'

It is by studying man that I have arrived at a knowledge of physiology, that, had I but a more extended field for the exercise of my talent, would render me celebrated."

I bade the self-complacent Doctor farewell, leaving him far from being satisfied at what he considered my wilfulness and obstinacy, in not yielding to his advice. Little did Pope think that the line quoted so gravely would be taken as bearing reference to *the physical instead of the moral state of man!*

*And I could reflect on such things, ay, and even for a moment*

smile at the weakness of the poor Doctor, while my own mind was even at the moment conscious of still greater weakness, and that my heart was oppressed at the thought of the contents of the trunk in my chamber. Frequently during the day did I feel in my waistcoat pocket to be sure that the key of my writing-case was safely lodged in it; because in that writing-box was the key of the trunk! When I entered my house, I walked straight to the bedroom to see that the trunk had not been touched; and often did my eyes turn to it with a mingled sentiment of horror and dread.

I had ordered post-horses for an early hour on the following morning. Oh! how I wished the long evening, and longer night, was over; for I shuddered at the thought of being alone to gaze on objects that wrung my heart with sorrow, by reminding me of my lost, my adored wife, and of passing the night in the chamber with the trunk. What fearful dreams might it not occasion, the bare sight of it agitating me so violently!

My scarcely-tasted dinner removed, I summoned Mrs. Burnett to come and sit with me, so much did I dread being alone. It was no supernatural fear that haunted me, no, it was the fear of my own sad thoughts—my own troubled dreams, which tortured and unmanned me.

I encouraged the inquiries of my worthy house-keeper relative to my daughter. She had endless questions to ask, all betraying the deep interest she felt for this last scion of a house she had so faithfully served.

"And Jenny, the nurse, Sir," said she, "I suppose she is in London, with dear Miss Herbert?"

"No," replied I, "she preferred remaining in Malta, and I left her."

"What! let her young lady come back over the sea alone?" observed the good woman. "Oh, what an unnatural, ungrateful creature she must be! It is fortunate that her poor widowed mother is in her grave, for it would have broken her heart, to



know that her daughter had behaved so ill. But to speak the truth, when I heard that wicked, crazy fellow, who came here, speak of her as *his* intimate friend, I began to fear *she* could not be good for much. Ah, Sir, when a foolish girl has no steady, elderly woman, or strict mistress to look after her, she is sure to fall into a scrape."

When the word mistress had escaped Mrs. Burnet's lips, her changed aspect, and timid glance at me, disclosed how much she regretted her inadvertence in having used a word so carefully guarded against since my arrival. Poor, faithful creature! with intuitive tact and tenderness, she knew that the wound in my heart was still too recent to bear the touch, and could not forgive herself for reverting to it.

When at length it was time to retire to bed, she offered me some syrup of hops, from her little store of medicines, kept for the use of her poor neighbours.

"A few drops, Sir, will calm your nerves, und procure you a tranquil night. Often have I known my dear lady, your honoured mother, obtained a few hours' rest, when her deep grief kept her waking."

How these few words brought back to my mind that deep grief I had so often witnessed, and, alas! after the first few weeks, so little sympathized in. The darkened chamber, and the pale mourner, with tear-stained cheeks, again seemed to stand before me. How little did that fond mother anticipate that her son, who had been so insensible to *her* sorrow, would so soon become a prey to *his* own. A merciful Providence has, in pity, veiled the future from us — for those who might have courage to support their own heavy trials, would surely sink could they but know the troubles ordained to fall on those dear to them. As this reflection arose in my mind, I prayed that my child might be spared the misfortunes *I had undergone*, and my heart was melted with tenderness as I *thought of her*.

The syrup of hops produced a most salutary effect. I enjoyed some hours of refreshing slumber, and awoke more calm than I had been of late. Thankful for this relief, I possessed myself of the bottle, and after having partaken of an early breakfast, and seen *the trunk* safely consigned to the interior of my chaise, *malgré* the reiterated representations of my good housekeeper, that it would incommode me, and that it might be securely attached by cords behind the carriage, I placed funds in her hands to enable her to extend her charities to the poor; and wringing the hand that warmly clasped mine — its owner with streaming eyes and faltering lips praying for blessings on me and mine.

I entered the chaise, and was driven rapidly away from the spot endeared to me by a thousand fond but mournful recollections, which rendered a sojourn in it too painful to be borne, until time had softened the bitterness of regret, and could enable me to look on the objects and scenes that now tortured me with less anguish.

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## CHAPTER LX.

INSTEAD of proceeding directly to London, I determined to go to Portskewell, a little village not far from Chepstow, remain there a day or two, then cross over to Clifton, and thence go to London. — Never for a single hour, nay, more, for even half that period, did I forget the contents of the trunk, to which my eyes were continually reverting. The horror I experienced at contemplating this unseemly receptacle of all that remained of the once lovely being to whom they appertained, far from diminishing, increased; and as I reflected that I could not give these sacred relics the rites of Christian sepulture, I groaned aloud, and beat my breast in despair. — When I stopped for the night, I had the trunk conveyed to my chamber, though well aware that its proximity to my couch would debar me from slumber; but I feared to allow it to be out of my sight, lest by some unlucky chance it might be opened and its contents being revealed, lead to suspicion, and investigation.

Arrived at Portskewell, after the most painful journey I ever made, I took up my abode at a small inn, near the water's edge; and early the next morning, opening the trunk, and enveloping a portion of its contents in a Scots shepherd's plaid, I concealed the skull in a large silk handkerchief, which I slung to my waist, beneath the large cloak I wore, and walking to the shore, hired a boat "for an hour's pleasure," as I told the owner, though my lips almost refused to utter the words.

"*You had better let me, or one of my lads accompany you, Sir,*" said the boatman, "for sudden squalls often come on here,

which are dangerous for those not well accustomed to the management of a boat."

I declined the offer, however, and so peremptorily, that the man said, "just as you like, Sir, it's all one to me," and I entered the boat, still grasping the shepherd's plaid; which I never let out of my hand, until I had placed it on the seat by me. The owner of the boat pushed it from the shore, and I took the oars and rowed towards the opposite coast; the boatman remaining at the water's edge, as if watching how I managed his little vessel, until it was nearly out of sight.

I then removed the limbs from the plaid, and let one drop into the water; proceeded in another direction, and let another fall, and so one by one, always changing my course between each fragment, I consigned to the deep, all had disappeared. I then, removing the handkerchief, immersed the skull, and, with a beating heart and distended eyes, beheld the circling eddies close over it, as it sank many fathoms deep into its watery grave! I then refolded the plaid as it had formerly been, and, with trembling hands, rowed back towards the shore, within a short distance of which I continued, until my violent emotion had subsided, when I landed, and, ordering the boatman to have his boat ready for another excursion in a couple of hours, as also for the same hour the following morning, I retraced my steps to the inn.

This measure was adopted to avoid exciting suspicion by my solitary excursion that morning; and it was, perhaps, well that I had recourse to it, for my host, while serving breakfast, observed that the boatman had been there to inquire whether I had left any effects at the inn, in case I might not return with his boat.

"Did he suspect my honesty, then?" demanded I, "or was it that he feared my want of skill to manage his little vessel?"

"Perhaps a little of both, Sir," replied the landlord, laughing; "for old Will Stevens thinks as much of his boat as of his sons, and couldn't make out why you, whom he instantly took to be a landsman, should prefer rowing yourself, when you might have one of his lads to row you. Will is a sharp old chap, and rather given to be suspicious. He fancied that you were come to this out-of-the-way place to hide from your creditors; and that all your worldly goods were concealed in your large plaid, you seemed so careful of it, he said; or under your cloak, and so was uneasy: but when I told him you had left plenty of luggage here, he was quite satisfied."

I said that, my health being poorly of late, my physician had ordered me to move about as much along the sea-coast as possible, and to be on the water, and row myself, which he thought would be good for my chest. This explanation seemed perfectly satisfactory to my host, who, I dare say, as long as his best rooms were occupied, his larder put in requisition, and his wine ordered, cared very little for the motive which led his customers to Portskewell.

A weight of anxiety seemed removed from my heart, since the remains of the dead had been consigned to the deep. No longer did I put my hand to my waistcoat pocket, to assure myself that the key of my writing-box was safe; no longer did I dread the possibility of the trunk being opened in my absence! Nevertheless, I could not divest myself of a feeling of horror, when I reflected that my hand, which should have shielded the sacred remains of my wife's sister—the lovely, the pure creature, whom my folly had doomed to a premature death—had consigned them to a watery grave. I wondered how I had found nerve to get through this painful ordeal; but the dread of *discovery, of exposure, of having the name of my daughter sullied by my supposed guilt*, had steeled my nerves, and

enabled me to pass through this last painful trial, as it had through the heavy previous ones.

Though most desirous to leave Portskewell, I remained there two whole days, passing the greater portion of them on the water, and always alone. On one occasion I affected to let drop my plaid, before I stepped into the boat, taking care, as I did so, that the folds should open; and when Will Stevens took it up from the strand, I called out to him to take great care of it, as I would not lose it on any account, and requested he would fold it up, as before. On another, I purposely let my cloak fall from my shoulders, and noticed that the sharp old man narrowly watched my person, as if he expected to see something concealed on it.

I left this retired spot, where, having no occasion to make my name known, or no gossiping servant to reveal it, I was recognised only as the "gentleman;" which designation stood at the top of my bill. I proceeded to London, as rapidly as I could, for I impatiently longed to behold my daughter, and to press her once more to my breast. I felt as if I had been months absent from her; and my fond heart prompted the question whether *she* had felt this separation as deeply as I had? Yet my reason whispered that, at her age, with kind friends, a charming playfellow, and so many novel objects and scenes to attract her attention, it would be unreasonable to expect that I should be remembered with such engrossing tenderness by her, as she was by me. I found myself already forming excuses for any little disappointment she might inflict on me, by a less demonstrative mode of betraying her affection than I could have desired; and determined to be pleased — to be happy was, alas! out of the question.

I hurriedly exchanged my travelling dress for a more suitable one for such a visit, and hastened to Mrs. Neville's. — How quickly beat my heart, and how my hand trembled, as I knocked at the door! I was ushered into the library; and, in a few minutes after, my daughter was in my arms! After pressing her

again and again to my heart, I put her from me, that I might gaze on her.

Never had I seen so great an improvement as that effected during the short time she had passed with Mrs. Neville. The good taste of her kind protectress had effected this improvement in her dress; the arrangement of her beautiful hair, and in her carriage, and the example of her charming playmate, had taught her a more feminine manner. I had thought her so perfect before, that I had been blind to the defects in her dress and deportment, until now, that I witnessed the vast revolution operated in both. She looked more like than ever to her angelic mother, and I was proud and grateful for the change.

The dear girl's caresses were so warm—so affectionate—that I, fastidious and jealous as I was disposed to be, at the least semblance of a diminution in her tenderness for me, felt perfectly satisfied, and expressed to her the dictates of my doting fondness.

Encouraged into confidence by my caresses, the artless child, clasping my neck with her arms, exclaimed, —

“Oh! dear papa, I am so happy with dear, good Mrs. Neville, and dear Matilda! Won't you let me stay with them always?”

What a sharp pang was that which shot through my heart, as my daughter uttered these words!

“Then you could do without *me*, Frances,” said I, reproachfully.

“No, papa! I could not do without you for a long, long time; but while you went into Wales, or were travelling about to other places, and I had dear Mrs. Neville to love me dearly, as she does, and dear Matilda to play with me, and walk with me, when our lessons are over—I could do without you for a short time. It is so pleasant to have some one who is like a mamma, to buy one nice dresses, and to see that they are nicely made,

and properly put on; and that one's hair is nicely arranged; and to have some one who is like a sister, to play with, and not to be always with a nurse, who isn't at all like a lady, and who can't answer any of the questions I ask her, — who is always saying, 'I'm sure, Miss, I don't know', — and, 'I wish you would not ask so many questions. Young ladies ought not to be asking questions.' Now, there has been so many things, papa, that I wanted to know, and that nurse could not tell me."

"Why did you not ask me, Frances?"

"Because sometimes when I asked, you did not seem to hear me, dear papa; and you looked so sad, that I thought my questions tired you, as they did nurse. But I ask dear Matilda every question that comes into my head, and a great, great many do come; and when I ask any that she does not know, she goes to her mamma, who tells me so plainly, — so nicely, — that I understand it, and never forget it after. And dear, good Mrs. Neville likes me to ask her questions. It never tires her a bit, papa. Oh! I am so happy here! I am always glad when I awake in the morning, for I say to myself, I shall have such a pleasant day with Matilda; and at night, when I am going to sleep, I think how nice it will be to have the next day, like the day before."

Although pleased at the knowledge of my dear child's perfect happiness, and most truly grateful to those kind friends who constituted it, so strong was the leaven of selfishness which pervaded my nature, that I could not vanquish the regret I experienced at discovering that she could be perfectly happy away from me! I, however, smoothed my brow, when a message came from Mrs. Neville, that she should be glad to see me in the drawing-room, was delivered to me; and tenderly embracing my daughter, I permitted her to rejoin her young companion, while I proceeded to the tea-table. Mrs. Neville's reception of me was kind, and cordial. Her own feelings had taught her to sympathize with mine, at reviewing the scene of my former happiness.



My pale face was a proof to her of the chagrin I had endured since we parted, and she endeavoured to soften it by the commendations she bestowed on my child. When I attempted to express my sense of obligation for the wonderful improvement I discovered in her, she declared that Frances was so sweet-tempered, and intelligent a child, that it was a positive pleasure to instruct her, and greatly tended to the advantage of her own daughter by the emulation it excited in their studies.

When I returned to my hotel, I found my servant in a state of considerable alarm.

"Would you believe it, Sir," said he, "soon after you left to go to Mrs. Neville's this evening, the two ruffians Bradstock and Motcombe came here, and asked to see you. They were so pressing, that the porter called me to satisfy them that you were not in the house, and they assumed such an insolent and bullying tone, that I am sure, by the looks and manner of the waiters who happened to be in the hall, as also by the porters' manner, that they took these vile fellows to be creditors, or in short, Sir, some persons who had a claim on you. They had evidently been drinking, and smelt of tobacco so strongly, that the porter and waiters were anxious to get them out of the hall."

"Tell your master that it's no manner of use to deny himself to us," said one of them.

"Ay, and let him know, that our business is of such importance to him, that he'd better not trifle with us," observed the other in a menacing tone.

"I assure you, Sir, I was quite ashamed and confounded by their impudence, and I know it has occasioned much talk among the waiters."

"Let me know when they call again," said I, assuming as unconcerned a tone as I could; "and mind, if I ring the bell *while they are with me*, you send for the police, to whom, if *they attempt to be insolent*, I will give them in charge."

This last part of my instructions seemed to give peculiar satisfaction to my servant. His countenance brightened up at once, and he said, "Ah, Sir, you will be doing a real service to society in exposing such scoundrels, and in delivering them up to the law!"

Although fully convinced that these men could really do nothing more than endeavour to extort money from me by menaces, which they were unable to enforce, I nevertheless could not close my eyes during that night. All exposure of suspicious circumstances — and that there were such connected with my case I was fully aware — occasioned me such uneasiness, that I writhed at the bare notion of publicity being given to them.

To yield to the threats of these wretches, in the hope of buying their silence by gold, would, I knew by past experience, be unavailing, yet such was my reluctance to have my name brought before the public, and subjected to the comments of the world, that though aware no proof of guilt could be brought against me, and consequently that I must be acquitted of any charge preferred, I would have made a very large pecuniary sacrifice to prevent the affair in question being agitated. I knew, however, that if I once yielded to menaces, I should ever more be subjected to a repetition of them, and that the having yielded would establish a proof that I feared those who had extorted money from me. My mind fully made up on this point, I had again recourse to the syrup of hops given to me by my worthy housekeeper, and by its aid procured, towards morning, two or three hours of sleep and having dressed, and drank a cup of strong coffee, I awaited in no slight anxiety the threatened visit of Messrs. Bradstock and Motcombe. They did not make their appearance until two o'clock, and both bore evidence of their having had recourse to brandy to strengthen their courage.

## CHAPTER LXI.

PRIDE is sometimes of use! Mine had been so outraged by the attempt made to intimidate me by the vile men who now stood in my presence, that indignation lent me courage to assert my own honour, and repel their insolence. I stood up as they entered the room, and looking sternly at them, inquired their business with me.

"I think you must have some inkling of it," said Bradstock.

"Not the slightest," observed I.

"Come, come, Mr. Herbert, it's no use shamming ignorance," interposed Motcombe, "we are the friends of poor Figgins, whom you attempted to murder at Malta, because you were afraid he'd let out your secret to us. He has told us all, and you must now pay for our silence, as well as his, or we will declare what we know before a magistrate, have you arrested, and delivered up to justice."

It was evident that my calmness and sternness had somewhat daunted my villanous assailants, for though they endeavoured to appear confident, and free from fear, there was a trepidation in the manner of both that betrayed their surprise, if not their alarm, at finding me so cool and collected.

"If you expect to intimidate and extort money from me, by some conspiracy hatched up between you," answered I, "you will find yourselves greatly mistaken. I shall not only firmly resist any such attempts, but punish, as far as the law will admit, those who undertake them."

"Well, we'll see who'll have the best of it," said Bradstock, "*we know where the body of the lady you killed is now*

lying. Figgins went to Wales on purpose to have the proof, and removed the body, for fear that you would have it made away with. It's safe enough, I can tell you, and will prove against you yet."

"It's no wonder, after having killed a poor young creature, and your own sister-in-law into the bargain," remarked Motcombe, "that you should attempt to murder poor Figgins, in order that your secret should die with him. But he's alive, and although the split you made in his skull has touched his brain a little, he has his senses sometimes, and doesn't forget a single point in all he found out of your wickedness."

"No, not a point," rejoined Bradstock; "we've got him safe enough to be ready to bring him as a witness against you, in case you are so blind to your own interest as to compel us to proceed against you."

"What's a few hundred pounds, ay, or a few thousands even, in comparison with exposure, and the probability of being hanged?" demanded Motcombe. "We don't wish to be too hard on you, Mr. Herbert; indeed we don't. We would not like to make your daughter — a fine little girl she is, too — an orphan; but we must think of our own interests; and if chance has put a secret on which your character, and more, your life depends, in our keeping, we must be paid for it; we must not cheat the offended laws of our country, as the judge says when he is pronouncing sentence of death on some poor devil for a crime not one half as deep as yours, unless we can reconcile it to our consciences by receiving wherewithal to make us comfortable for the remainder of our lives."

It then occurred to me, that unless I could have some proof of the attempt of these men to extort money from me, I should not be able to prefer the charge against them; and, although very unwilling to temporize with such men, I was compelled to do so on the present occasion.

"Supposing I were disposed to avoid the publicity of a trial, which I am, however, perfectly convinced must terminate in my favour," said I, ashamed of my own enforced duplicity, in leading these vile fellows to imagine for a moment that I would yield to their attempts at imposition, "what may be the extent of your pretensions?"

They looked triumphantly at each other, concluding that they had succeeded in alarming me; and, after a short pause, Motcombe said that "fifteen hundred pounds, paid down, which would be five hundred for each of the three acquainted with my secret, could not be considered unreasonable."

"But what security should I have," demanded I, "that no further sum would ever be asked?"

They looked embarrassed; and then Bradstock offered to sign a paper, by which they should pledge themselves never more to claim anything at my hands.

"As I do not wish this interview to be prolonged," observed I; "suppose you consult together, elsewhere, the lowest terms you will accept for your silence, and send or bring me the written conditions. But I advise you to be moderate in your pretensions; for I decidedly will not give anything like the sum you have named."

"Very well, Sir, we will furnish you with our terms in writing," replied Bradstock; "but I really don't think we can take much less than the fifteen hundred. Your character is worth more than that, set aside your life, Sir, which would be in great danger."

"Yes, certainly," added Motcombe; "Mr. Herbert's character and life are worth twenty times that paltry sum, more especially with such a nice young lady for a daughter. Oh, what a terrible thing it would be for her to have her father bring disgrace on her name, or perhaps to have him hanged!"

*How my blood boiled, and how I longed to punish the*

scoundrels! But I checked my anger, and told them that the next day I would expect to receive their terms; and they removed towards the door to withdraw.

Before they left the room, however, they turned to me, and Motcombe said, "I mean no offence, Sir, but I think it as well to tell you that it will, be quite useless for you to attempt to give us the slip, as you did Figgins, more than once."

"Yes," added Bradstock, "we 'll be constantly on the watch, and are too sharp to be caught napping."

I disdained to reply to these insolent hints, and they withdrew, leaving me fully determined, when furnished with a written proof of their conspiracy to extort money from me, to deliver them over to justice.

My servant made some excuse for entering my room, soon after the departure of Motcombe and Bradstock. His countenance betrayed deep dissatisfaction and disappointment; and he ventured to say, "I expected every moment, Sir, that you would ring the bell, that I might call the police to take charge of the two rascals who have just gone. I saw them leave the house in high spirits, as if they were content with the result of their visit here; and it went to my heart to see the waiters and porters looking at them with surprise and suspicion as they marched off. They were remarking, too, how long those shabby fellows had stayed with you, and what business you could have with such men."

"My intention of employing the police with regard to them, is only postponed, not abandoned," observed I. "It was absolutely necessary for me to have positive proof of their conspiracy to extort money from me, in order to proceed against them. That proof they will furnish to-morrow, and when they come, I will, as soon as it is in my hands, ring the bell for you to have the police summoned."

"And right glad I shall be to see the rascals taken up, and

punished for their scheming. Figgins let out to me, when he was tipsy, that they were the greatest rogues he had ever met, and that his life would not be safe in their hands, if they got him in their power. They wanted, he said, to get secrets from him that he never would entrust them with. I assure you, Sir, added Thomas, that he was mortally afraid of them."

"Only imagine these men accusing me of attempting to murder Figgins, and inflicting that wound on his head which you saw him receive when he fell, and hit it against the table."

"Is it possible the villains dare make such a false charge against you, Sir?" and he opened wide his eyes in astonishment and indignation. — "After such a proof of their infamy as this, it can't be doubted, Sir, but that they are capable of anything," replied Thomas.

It now occurred to me that it would be necessary for me to consult a lawyer for the prosecution of Motcombe and Bradstock, and remembering that Mr. Goldey, the executor of my poor friend Vise, was one, I determined to go and state the case to him. I found him at home, and when I informed him that I wished his aid in a legal matter, he could not conceal his satisfaction.

There are two classes of persons towards whom the wise declare a man should never have any reserve when he consults them, namely, a physician and a lawyer; and that however humiliating to one's *amour propre* may be the revelations not a single circumstance of the case, physical or moral, should be omitted. I was compelled to remember this counsel several times, while relating the facts connected with my case to Mr. Goldey, for I felt aware that however favourably he might be disposed to judge from the good opinion entertained by our mutual friend Vise of me, proved by his liberal bequest, there were circumstances, but too well calculated to convey suspicion against me in the disclosures I was *making*, and my natural pride and reserve revolted from uttering *them*. I was, however, compelled to begin at the beginning.

in order to make him comprehend the whole case. I narrated the idiosyncrasy which, from childhood to manhood, had marked my character — the pride, the shyness which made me shrink from aught that could cast even a shade on my name.

“Yes, yes, I understand,” observed he. “Our late friend, in speaking of you, often remarked that you were the proudest and shyest young man he ever knew.”

I related the state of grief and excitement occasioned by arriving too late to receive the blessing of my mother, after travelling night and day without refreshment or sleep, in the hope of finding her still alive. I mentioned particularly the not having left the house from the moment of my arrival until that on which I attended the funeral of my mother, immediately after which I returned home so much exhausted by fatigue and sorrow, that I went to bed with symptoms of brain fever, and sank into a troubled slumber from which I was awake several hours after by a loud knocking at the door, occasioned by the servant of a lady in the immediate neighbourhood, a friend of my deceased parent, but whom I had never seen, coming to inquire whether a daughter of the lady's had been to my house, for that she was missing, and could no where be found. I stated the effect produced on my already excited mind by this news, for that, although I had never seen the lady nor her daughters, I had discovered, through my mother's letters, that both were beautiful and amiable, and that she hoped one of them might become my wife, so I felt no common interest towards them. I narrated every circumstance connected with my accompanying their servant, ill as I was, in his search; — of the deep regret occasioned by its being unavailing; — of the notion entertained, and repeatedly expressed to me by the servant, that the young lady must have fallen over a steep precipice near her favourite walk, where the path was very narrow; and of the violent attack of brain fever which followed, *keeping me many weeks confined to my bed, during the nights of*



which I continually dreamt that I saw the young girl fall over the precipice, nay, sometimes that I threw her over, and uttered the most incoherent ravings. I stated, that so great was the shock on my nerves, that for many months after, whenever assailed by illness, these dreams and ravings returned;—that up even to the present time, if attacked by fever, to which I was peculiarly liable, I was harassed by the same dreams.

I related my marriage, the discovery of the corpse of my wife's sister on the day of my wedding; its interment in my family vault; my subsequent bad state of health, and removal into Devonshire; my wife's delicate constitution; her being ordered to Nice; her death; my grief, and its consequences; return of brain fever; Figgins being engaged to sit up with me at night; my incoherent ravings leading him to imagine me guilty of a crime, and his taking advantage of his supposed discovery to extort money from me, when, with broken health and shattered nerves, I was rendered incapable of resisting his menaces.

"But surely," said the lawyer, who had been making notes of my communication, "you were not so — (he paused to find a less harsh word than that which arose to his lips) — so incautious as to betray your fear of his threats, by yielding to his extortion? Or if you did, I trust there was no witness to your giving him money, no proof that you had done so?"

I was so ashamed of my folly, my madness, that I was greatly tempted to conceal the fact of my having given him a cheque, and for a large amount too; but convinced that this proof might be produced against me hereafter, I acknowledged the truth.

"This, Mr. Herbert," said he, "is the only bad feature in the whole of your case; the only evidence that can be brought against you. How very unfortunate it is that you gave him a cheque! Gentlemen should know enough of law to keep out of such scrapes *as furnishing evidence against themselves;*" and he shook his head, and looked very grave. "A large sum, too, you say?"

I named the precise one. He shook his head again, and looked still more grave.

"This will have a very bad effect, a very bad effect indeed, before a jury, should the case come to that. In all countries, and more especially in England, where money is so highly appreciated, it is always taken for granted that a man does not part with any considerable portion of it without some cogent reason, Mr. Herbert. What pretext can we allege for your giving so large a sum to the man in question? He was not an old servant of yours; was not empowered by you to disburse money, pay bills, or keep cash in hand for you. There will, consequently, arise a foregone conclusion, that you must have been in some way or another in this man's power, and that the money was given to secure his silence. What has become of him? And how have the men who now conspire to extort money from you, become cognizant of the supposed secret, with the disclosure of which he first, and they now, menace you?"

I stated my belief, that they had taken advantage of his habits of intoxication to get him to reveal it, when he was no longer master of his reason.

"I perceive," said Mr. Goldey, "that yours is, indeed, a very nervous temperament, and this peculiarity has unhappily involved you in difficulties, from which it will be no easy task to deliver you; for you have, unfortunately, furnished the only dangerous evidence against yourself. But we must try our best to extricate you; and remember, above all things, that you do not allow your nervousness to influence you again in yielding a single point to those villains who have conspired against you. Have these fellows prosecuted as soon as you have the proof of their conspiracy to produce. *Your* taking the first step in this affair will be in your favour, but you must make up your mind, Mr. Herbert, whenever publicity is given to this business, to find that many persons will be disposed to judge you severely, solely from the fact of your

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having given Figgins so large a sum. The value of money is, as I before observed, so duly appreciated in England, that few will be inclined to believe you would part with it, unless from a positive necessity."

I requested Mr. Goldey to draw up a brief, and to lay it before the most eminent counsel, and then I returned to my hotel in a state of mind that might have excited the pity of my bitterest enemy.

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## CHAPTER LXII.

Soon after I entered my temporary home, a letter signed by Motcombe and Bradstock was brought me, with an intimation that they waited for an answer. — I rang for my servant, and gave him instructions to have these men traced to their lodgings; and having desired the waiter to inform them that they might call the next day for a reply to their letter, I enclosed the proof of their conspiracy, which fortunately was so explicit as to furnish the clearest evidence against them, to my lawyer, and requesting him to accompany me to a magistrate, from whom a warrant for their arrest could be obtained, I walked to Mrs. Neville's to see my daughter.

Again the artless child referred to her desire to remain always in her present home; but seeing by my countenance that the wish pained me, she added, "and I want you too, dear papa, to come and live here with dear Mrs. Neville."

Such was the moodiness of my feelings that I received this innocent proof of the undiminished tenderness of my poor little Frances as an indication of cunning which displeased me, and only replied to it by inquiring whether, as it was impossible for me to live in Mrs. Neville's house, *she* would prefer leaving it to go with me, or stay altogether with that lady? With the instinctive tact of her sex, the dear girl, instead of answering my question, put one to me, "But why," said she, "can't you come and live here, dear papa? There is such a nice room, where no one sleeps, that I am sure good Mrs. Neville would give you; and as she gives me leave to call her mamma, you would give Matilda permission to call you papa, would you not? and then we might

all live together, and be so happy! Do let me ask Mrs. Neville to let you come and live with her, and be Matilda's papa, as she is now my mamma."

"No, Frances, you must never say a word more on this subject; but tell me at once whether, as I cannot live here with you, you prefer staying with Mrs. Neville and Matilda, or coming away with me?"

The dear child looked pained and embarrassed, but after a pause, replied, "If you, dear papa, will ask Mrs. Neville to let Matilda come and live with you and me, then I will prefer living with you."

I saw that the happiness of my child depended on her remaining where she was, and although the effort cost me a severe pang, I determined to sacrifice my own happiness to hers; and if Mrs. Neville were willing to take charge of her altogether, to resign her to her care, provided that I was permitted to defray all the expenses which such an arrangement must incur. I sought an interview with her, and before I could introduce the subject which led me to desire it, she opened it herself, by hoping that I had no intention of taking away Frances from her. She added, that she had conceived so warm an interest for the child, and her daughter was so much attached to her, that she desired nothing so much as to retain her. I had much difficulty in inducing her to consent to my defraying all the expenses which this increase to her family, as well as for masters in all the different branches of education and accomplishments, would occasion; and it was only when I declared that this was the sole condition on which I would leave my daughter with her, that she consented to have three hundred pounds annually placed at her banker's for my daughter's expenses. I wished to speak to her on the subject of the law-suit likely to take place, in order to prepare her to judge favourably of *me before the trial*. I thought that having taken charge of my daughter, it was only proper that she should be made acquainted

with aught that might militate against my character, ere yet it was too late to free herself from the charge, in case she should wish to resign it. But my tongue refused to frame the words, my lips to pronounce them; so I determined to write her that a conspiracy had been formed against me, which compelled me to seek protection from the laws of my country: and assuring her of my perfect innocence of the crime of which I was accused, I added, that I could not allow her, who offered a home to my child, to remain in ignorance of any charge that might, though but for a short time, impeach my character.

"On returning to my hotel I wrote this letter, and my lawyer having arrived, I entered a carriage with him, and was driven to a magistrate, to whom he was well known, and where, having sworn information against Motcombe and Bradstock for a conspiracy, a warrant was issued against them.

I had now passed the Rubicon — there was no longer any power of retreating.

"Oh, had I but taken this step," thought I, "when first the vile Figgins began his system of extortion, how many hours of torture might I have been spared, and how free should I now stand from the suspicions to which my weak, my mad compliance with his threats, must inevitably subject me!"

I received that evening an admirable letter from Mrs. Neville, stating her implicit belief in my freedom from guilt, whatever might be the accusation brought against me; but adding, that were it possible she could suspect the friend of her lost husband, or that even the appearance of criminality might involve him in ruin, she could never forget that she had pledged herself at the death-bed of the mother of my child, to prove a parent and a protectress to her, should it ever be required, and that never should she prove faithless to that solemn promise.

This generous, this noble-minded woman's letter brought tears to my eyes, while it removed a weight of care and anxiety

from my breast. Let the ordeal, through which I was to pass, terminate how it might, my child would escape the evil consequences it would entail on her unfortunate father. Safe beneath the roof of one of the most faultless and respectable of women, where nought but good example and virtuous precepts could reach her, she would grow up to be an ornament to her sex, and conciliate the regard of the estimable circle of friends who surrounded her admirable protectress; while should I selfishly retain her with me, she would be exposed to the solitude and friendless position into which my destiny had plunged me, and might suffer from the suspicions to which my folly, my madness, must subject my character.

The following day, Motcombe and Bradstock were brought up before the magistrate and committed for trial. Irritated to the utmost degree against me, they loudly proclaimed my guilt of the charge, to conceal which, they had in pity, as they alleged, consented to receive certain remunerations. They maintained that they could furnish indubitable proofs of my having committed murder, and displayed such undaunted assurance, that Mr. Goldey was greatly alarmed at the turn things were likely to take, as also at seeing that the charge had already produced a strong impression against me in the minds of all those who had been present at the examination.

"This will be a very serious inconvenience, if no worse," whispered he, "the charge they have made is not bailable, and it will be very annoying to you to submit to confinement, until the trial comes on."

"How! confinement did you say?" exclaimed I. "Surely the unsupported evidence of two such scoundrels cannot subject me to such treatment?"

"I fear it will, though," observed he, "for the law is very strict relative to such charges."

*To be sent to a prison!!* There was degradation, wretched-

ness, and madness, in the thought! And yet this had I brought down on my own head, the consciousness of which fact only served to increase my misery. My total ignorance of the law had led me into the fearful position in which I now found myself placed; and bitterly did I execrate the folly that had wrought the evil. Why had I not previously to indicting Motcombe and Bradstock, inquired the possibility of a result like the present to myself from such a measure?

These reflections were now, alas! too late, and nought was left me but to conceal as well as I could the agony of my mind, and await the evil I had brought on myself.

The magistrate now received the charge of my accusers. They were sworn, and I was committed to prison, — there to remain until my innocence should be proved; while they were condemned to the same doom.

Mr. Goldey's countenance had assumed a very grave and anxious expression; and although he attempted to offer some common-place consolations to me, it was evident that he was far from thinking as lightly of what had occurred as he wished me to believe. The magistrate and he spoke some time together in a low voice; and I heard the words, "The bill may be ignored, and then your client will recover his liberty," uttered by the former. "At all events, the trial will very soon come on," resumed the magistrate.

"A gentleman of family and fortune," said Mr. Goldey; "highly esteemed and respected, and only accused by two fellows of infamous character."

"So much the better for your client," replied the magistrate. "I am very sorry that he will be put to a temporary inconvenience; but it can't be helped, Mr. Goldey; and of course you can arrange that he should suffer as little discomfort as possible. There are good rooms in the prison, and these Mr. Herbert's *position and means* will enable him to have."



Mr. Goldey accompanied me in the carriage called to convey me to my new hateful abode, as well as two of the police; and, drawing my hat over my eyes, I sank back to avoid being seen by the passers.

To describe my feelings would be impossible. Weak and helpless as a child, my terror almost deprived me of reason; and when I entered the massive walls of the prison, and heard the heavy gates closed after me, I was ready to abandon myself to despair. Mr. Goldey arranged with the jailer, for all the amelioration which money could produce in such a dwelling, and remained with me until the hour when visitors are dismissed.

What would I not have given to have had him remain with me? But it was impossible; so I saw him depart, with a moodiness that alarmed me for my own sanity, now when I most required all my reason.

Soon after he had departed, the turnkey inquired whether I would not have some supper. "You can have what you like, Sir," said he, "and wine fit for any gentleman. We know how to treat gentlemen here."

"Yes, let me have some wine and water," replied I.

"Take my advice, Sir; drink the wine plain; 't will do you more good; for when a gentleman hasn't been used to such places as this, his spirits are apt to sink just at first; and wine does him good."

I drank a few glasses of the wine, which cheered me a little, and soon after fell into a deep but troubled sleep, from which I was awakened at an early hour by the noise occasioned by the opening of the doors, and the clanking of the chains, keys, and bars. For a few minutes I could not recall my senses sufficiently to remember where I was; but when I looked around and beheld the iron barred windows and style of the chamber, too soon did I become conscious of the place, and of all the painful events of the previous day.

I had never formed an idea of the interior of a prison; and even the modified form in which I now beheld it, struck me with dread and disgust. The mixture of unclean finery, and sordid squalidness in the furniture, was offensive to the eye; and the odour of the ill-ventilated chamber, into which the fresh air was seldom allowed to penetrate, was no less so to my nasal organs.

I groaned in spirit when I reflected that in this odious room I might be compelled to remain some time; nor did my spirits improve when the turnkey brought me the morning newspapers, giving, in the police reports, the particulars of the examination and committals of the previous day, headed by a charge of murder against Marmaduke Herbert, Esq., a gentleman of considerable fortune, by two men named Motcombe and Bradstock, against whom Mr. Herbert had sworn information for a conspiracy to extort money from him.

This publicity, although anticipated, tortured me. I fancied that henceforth, wherever I might go, every eye would be turned on me, that already I was prejudged and found guilty in public opinion. I dreaded even to meet the glance of the turnkey, and would have desired not to see even my own servant, whose services, however, I could not dispense with. Had I been actually the guilty wretch which Motcombe and Bradstock accused me of being, I could not have shrunk more from observation than I now did, although morally certain that the result of a trial must exculpate me from guilt, even if it could not exonerate me from the suspicious appearances to which my own madness could alone have given rise. How I loathed my past cowardice, and yet my present pusillanimity was scarcely less reprehensible. — The changed aspect of my servant when he presented himself in my prison, although it proved the deep interest he felt in my situation, testified also the alarm it excited in his mind. I could perceive that my present abode seemed

to furnish him with a solution to the mysterious circumstances connected with Figgins's visits to Naples, Sorento, Palermo, and Malta, and finally to my admitting such a man beneath my roof. In short I saw, or imagined I saw, that my own servant had prejudged me; and although his assiduity to serve me had increased rather than diminished, I was more disposed to feel humiliated by, than grateful for it, so prone is a proud mind to reject even kindness, if accompanied by aught that can irritate it. I felt inclined to remain in bed, rather than go through the fatigue of dressing, which would bring me into more immediate personal contact with my servant, for while appearing to be occupied with the newspapers, though, heaven knows, I hardly knew what they contained save what related to me, I had no necessity to address him; but I mastered this inclination, and, making an effort, arose to be ready to receive Mr. Goldey's promised visit.

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## CHAPTER LXIII.

I COUNTED the hours, but still Mr. Goldey came not. What could occasion his protracted absence? A thousand vague fears connected with it tortured my mind, the most prominent of which was, that he believed me guilty, and would see me no more! My reason in vain combatted this dread, a dread that gained ground every minute that marked the progress of time by my watch, which I kept continually looking at. I tried to find consolation in the consciousness of my innocence of the crime with which I was charged, and in the reflection that of dishonour and guilt alone should a man be ashamed, but alas! I had not now to learn, that reason is often unable to vanquish the terror of imagination, and that to a proud and sensitive mind the dread of the exposure of its weakness is almost as appalling as if crime, and not folly, were to be revealed,

At length Mr. Goldey arrived; for hours had I expected him. Oh! how long and tedious had they appeared, before he made his appearance. Little had I ever imagined that his presence could give me such satisfaction as I now experienced at beholding him.

He looked fatigued and anxious, and I suppose my countenance had revealed to him how much inquietude the delay in his coming had occasioned me, for he said, "I couldn't come sooner, I assure you I couldn't, although I tried all in my power. But I had so many places to go to, so many persons to see, that every moment since I arose this morning at an early hour, has been filled up. I trust, however, that my time has not been

thrown away. Fortunately for you, the bill of indictment preferred by those scoundrels against you, will be brought before the proper authorities to-morrow, and I indulge sanguine hopes that it will be ignored, in which case you will immediately be restored to your liberty, which will be a great point gained, for I was fearful there might be a delay of several days here."

I could have embraced him as he uttered these words, and yet I believed them to be too good to be true.

Mr. Goldey lost not an opportunity like the present, to launch out into all the technicalities of his profession, the greater number of which were, in truth, utterly incomprehensible to me. But no longer did I feel disposed to find fault with them, nor with the more than ordinary degree of self-complacency with which he pronounced them. I felt that he was now invested with a very different character in my eyes, to that which I had regarded him in our first interview. *Then*, he only appeared ridiculous; *now*, he was the sole person on whom I could count to extricate me out of the difficulties in which I had so unhappily placed myself. I listened with breathless interest to his legal phraseology, and was sorry to see him take his departure, although, as he assured me it was for the purpose of attending to my case.

When left alone, my gloomy thoughts, banished during his presence, returned with increased force; and, when I sought my couch, I only slumbered a short time, when I started from it in terror, believing myself to be in a Court of Justice, invested with much more awful solemnity, than any such court ever was. I seemed to behold the malicious faces of the opposing counsel; the alarmed ones of my own. The cool assurance of the witnesses against me, — the embarrassed manner of those on my side, — the contemptuous looks of the crowded audience — and *the stern glance of the judge*. My brain seemed seared by fire, and cold drops, wrung by agony, fell fast from my brow. Mrs.

Neville and my daughter seemed to be present, and gazed on me with sorrow, mingled with horror — until my child, the burning blush of shame glowing on her lovely face, and indignation flashing from her eyes, tried to hide her countenance with her handkerchief, and uttering a piercing shriek, fell, lifeless, to the earth.

Such were my dreams, — and sleep became no longer “tired nature’s sweet restorer,” but a fearful dream which tortured, and thrilled me with terror. When awaking from such troublous dreams, and looking at my prison, I wondered how I ever had the courage to draw such misery on myself, by instituting legal proceedings against Motcombe and Bradstock, when, by the sacrifice of fifteen hundred pounds, I might have purchased their silence, if not for ever, at least for some time; and in that time death might snatch me from their power, or rid the earth of them. Was not the unusual courage on my part, which urged me to resistance, an outbreak of folly — of madness? And I dwelt on the question until, as on many previous occasions, I strongly doubted my own sanity.

Mr. Goldey sent me the brief he had drawn up to be given to counsel; and as I perused it, I was compelled to acknowledge that, notwithstanding the innumerable instances of tautology and technicalities, which rendered it tedious, and obscured its sense, he had omitted nothing of all that I had stated to him. The following day Mr. Goldey came to me early.

“I still hope,” said he, “that the bill of indictment against you will be ignored this day, and that you will be restored to liberty. I cannot think, that on hearsay evidence, which, after all, is the only evidence those rascals can bring forward, a true bill will be found. We can, if it be thrown out, as I expect, proceed against the parties for false imprisonment and perjury; *nevertheless, it will be necessary to summon friends to give their*

testimony to your character on the trial; and the more highly respectable and well-known they may be, the better. Think over those with whom you have most lived in England, and make a list, as well as of the individuals on the Continent, with whom you have been on habits of intimacy."

He looked surprised and pained, too, when I related to him, how extremely circumscribed was the circle of my acquaintance in my native land, and explained the cause of its being so limited. To do this, I was compelled to enter into a brief history of my school, and college life, — my unpopularity and wounded feelings, during both, — reminiscences, fraught with pain and humiliation to me; and these feelings were increased, as I marked how little he seemed to comprehend or enter into them.

"It would require a philosophical casuist, well versed in the study of men's minds, to fully understand the peculiarity of your's, Mr. Herbert," said he; "while I am only a lawyer — a mere practical man of business, knowing more of law than of human nature, and only able to judge of the minds and feelings of others, by comparing them with my own. I know that at school, the first boy with whose conduct towards me I was offended, I would have had a pugilistic combat with; and at college, I should have resented any symptom of coldness, or avoidance towards me, by instantly and indignantly demanding satisfaction."

I could perceive that Mr. Goldey more than suspected me of a want of proper spirit; and this suspicion having wounded me, I endeavoured to explain to him, that an excess of pride may sometimes lead to a conduct, which may bear the appearance of a want of it.

"Possibly!" replied he; "but as I am no casuist, I do not comprehend these distinctions. According to my notions, the

greater the degree of pride, the more unbearable would be the least approach to insult, and the more prompt the attempt to repel and chastise it."

I felt I must remain a coward in Mr. Goldey's eyes, as it would be utterly useless to endeavour to make him comprehend my character; yet I made one more effort to justify my courage, by telling him of the duel I fought at college.

But even this fact did not seem to elevate me much in his estimation, for he merely observed — "that he believed all men might be brought to fight if their anger were once excited to a certain point."

The renewal of my friendship with Neville, whose character he happened to know, stood very high in the opinion of those with whom he was acquainted, he considered a strong point in my favour. The esteem also of the two individuals to whom I was best known, testified by their bequests to me, might be of use, and the respect of the only persons in my thinly inhabited neighbourhood, the clergyman and doctor, who could be called to speak of my character, would have weight, as also of the only foreigners with whom I had lived in intimacy in Italy; — all these, men of high reputation, and whom it would be needful to summon to England.

"Men, or rather boys, know not," said Mr. Goldey, "how great is the importance of their making friends at school, and at college. It gives the colour to their future lives, for he who has no friends at these places, will seldom make any elsewhere, and no one can say how requisite they may be at some period or other of his existence."

The truth of this assertion could not be doubted, and my life offered an illustration of its wisdom; but who in early youth is governed by prudence, or forethought, or can conquer his natural character, if reserve and pride happen to constitute its ~~most~~ *prominent features*?



The ensuing day, the bill of indictment against me was ignored, and I was liberated after three days passed in prison, my sole redress being to bring an action for false imprisonment and perjury, against men, already sunk too low, to suffer from any additional charge.

I returned to the hotel, where I had taken up my abode previously to my arrest, but was met by such cold looks, and scrutinizing glances, as intimated that my return there was as little desired as anticipated.

"Your apartments, Sir," said the waiter, "are now occupied by another gentleman, who has engaged them for some months. We really did not expect that you could resume them, after having seen in the papers —"

I cut short his speech, by asking whether there were no other rooms empty which I could take by the week or month?

"I will go and inquire of Mr. Moffat," replied he, and he left me in the hall to be stared at by several other waiters and servants, who came there as soon as they heard of my arrival. The man speedily returned, and said that there was not a single room empty in the house, although I had during his brief absence overheard another waiter inform a gentleman who came to engage apartments, that they had several.

Mortified and humiliated beyond measure, I was about to leave the house, when I was informed that Mr. Goldey, although he had paid my account which had been furnished to him, had omitted to settle for the room in which my luggage had been put, and, "How much is the sum?" demanded I, greatly annoyed at being detained in the hall to be gazed on by the vulgar herd assembled there.

"Only a guinea a day, Sir," was the cool reply, and I paid it, *as I would readily have done thrice the amount, to get out of the house.*

My servant went up to the room, to have my luggage removed, while I proceeded to Mr. Goldey's, leaving instructions with him to follow me there. My brain seemed to burn, and a sense of shame and degradation, bowed me down. I fancied that every eye was upon me, that every one recognized the lately liberated prisoner charged with murder. When I related the conduct of the hotel-keeper, Mr. Goldey said,

"I, by all means, advise you to let me proceed against this fellow: He has no right to refuse accommodation to any gentleman who conducts himself properly in his house."

And then followed a string of legal technicalities, to which, heaven knows, I was ill disposed to listen at that moment.

"The question now is to procure me a lodging in some other hotel," observed I, impatiently.

"True, true," answered Mr. Goldey; "I know one, where your will find yourself very comfortable; although it is not what is termed a fashionable hotel."

He instantly sent one of his clerks to engage rooms for me, who soon returned to announce that all would be ready for my reception in a few minutes. Meanwhile, a hackney-coach, laden with my luggage, was driven up to Mr. Goldey's door, and my servant stepped from it, with a face crimsoned with anger.

"Would you believe it, Sir," said he, "those rascally fellows had put all your things into a damp loft, although they had the impudence to charge you a guinea a day for a room, in which they pretended they kept them. But I have given one of them a lesson, he will remember for some time; for when he told me they never took in criminals, nor jail-birds, into their hotel, but only the first quality in the land, I just gave him a box in the face that loosened some of his teeth, I'll be sworn."

"There you were wrong, very wrong," observed Mr. Goldey;

"never take the law into your own hands. *We* might have brought an action for defamation against this fellow, and got damages."

"What, Sir, would you have me stand by, and hear my master insulted?"

"Certainly, for the law would have given your master redress."

My servant did not seem to relish this opinion, for he shook his head, as much as to say, that he preferred a summary act of justice, to waiting for a protracted legal one.

I drove to the hotel, where, having taken some refreshment of which I stood greatly in need, I proceeded to Mrs. Neville's, to see my daughter, and return thanks to that excellent woman for her kindness. I discovered from my child, that my absence had been accounted for, by her protectress informing her that I had been suddenly summoned from town on business of importance, and that the precise time of my return was uncertain.

My unexpected visit filled my daughter with joy. She embraced and clung to me for several minutes, and I, melted by her fondness, could scarcely retain my tears. I had a short interview with Mrs. Neville, who had seen in the newspapers the statement of my arrest, and, to prevent its being talked of in her establishment, had destroyed the papers, so I was not pained by inquisitive looks from her servants, which I felt to be a relief.

Nothing could be kinder than the manner of Mrs. Neville. She hinted, but with the utmost delicacy, that it would be now incumbent on me to vanquish the natural reserve and shyness which had hitherto prevented my forming acquaintances, or friendships. That for my daughter's sake, I ought not to live *isolated*, and added, that surrounded as she herself was by the *friends of her dear husband*, an opportunity would be afforded

me of cultivating intimacies with persons who, knowing me to have been his friend, would feel disposed to give me a kind reception. I felt the wisdom, and friendship of this advice; but the publicity of the charge brought against me had so much increased my nervousness and timidity, that however convinced of the necessity of the exertion to conquer these peculiarities, I did not feel equal to it.

Mr. Goldey deemed it necessary that intelligence should be obtained of Figgins, so I wrote to the medical man, at Malta, to whose care I had confided him, to inform me of his actual state, and whether he was still there.

In due time, I received an answer, stating, that Figgins was in prison at Malta, where he had been lodged, as an accomplice in a robbery committed by two Englishmen, who had absconded, and for whose apprehension a reward had been offered. The abuse of strong liquors, acting on the fevered blood of this man, had rendered the wound in his head of a more serious character than had first been anticipated. His intellects were occasionally impaired, and his wretched female companion had met with great ill-usage at his hands. A subscription had been raised for her at Malta, and she had embarked for England a short time previous to the date of the letter I now received.

Mr. Goldey thought it advisable to have Figgins transferred from the prison at Malta, to one in London, in case his presence or evidence might be required; and the necessary steps being taken to effect this transfer, the order was sent out. I ventured not to give any opinion in my own case, for I saw that Mr. Goldey was disposed to suspicion whenever I interfered; so, though I did not in the slightest degree oppose Figgins's being sent to England, I entertained a secret dread that his presence would greatly tend to create prejudice against me. If, when beneath my roof, his appearance was disreputable and disgusting, how

much more so must it have become, by his increased habits of inebriety, and the reckless squalor that generally is induced by a long sojourn in prison. But the die was cast; I had placed myself in the hands of my legal adviser, and must abide the consequences.

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## CHAPTER LXIV.

IN a few days after the receipt of the letter from Malta, the unfortunate woman who had been the nurse-maid of my daughter, came to implore my pardon, and to entreat my charity. She had discovered my abode through having met my servant by chance in the street, and traced him to it. The misery and destitution to which the unfortunate woman had been reduced by Figgins, who had not only plundered her of her wages, but robbed her of all her clothes, disarmed my anger. She told me that while Figgins was still under the doctor's care, his two infamous companions, one of whom had been absent from Malta for some time, and had only a day or two returned, came to the lodging, to which the doctor had had him removed, commanding the strictest abstinence to be observed; these men constantly plied him with brandy, in defiance of the doctor's injunctions and her representations, until he became delirious. She was sure they wanted to cause his death. They questioned her closely about me, and when Figgins was out of his mind, they cross-examined him about some secret concerning me, which they said he possessed, and for concealing which, I had given him large sums of money. Figgins raved about my having murdered my wife's sister by throwing her over a precipice, and of his having gone to Wales and discovered the body.

They noted down every word he uttered, and when they got out all he knew, or imagined, for he was seldom an hour in his sober senses, they used to pour spirits down his throat, in spite of all she could say to prevent it. "It was from his ravings that I, for the first time, discovered that he had made a fool and a

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dupe of me, Sir," said the wretched woman, "and that instead of being in love with me, as he swore over and over again, he only pretended it, in order to know all about you, Sir, and about your movements. At Nice, he was always asking me questions about your place in Wales. Whether there were high rocks near it, and whether any lady had ever been killed there? I thought it was no harm to tell him that the only lady ever supposed to fall over the cliff, was Miss Maitland, the sister of my poor mistress. He then said he'd go to Wales to satisfy myself that I bore a good character in my native place, before he'd make up his mind to marry me; and as I knew he could not hear anything against me, I was quite pleased that he should go, for I thought when he came back we should be married.

"When he returned to Nice, he said he must put off our wedding until he got some money, which he expected very soon, and which would enable us to set up in business; and he made me promise that wherever you went, Sir, I should immediately write and tell him, in order that he might know where to come to marry me, the minute he got the money he expected. So I wrote to him from every place you went to, Sir, and he behaved very well to me until he took up with his wicked companions, Motcombe and Bradstock, and then he took to drinking, and became quite another man. Still, as he always swore he'd marry me, I like a fool wouldn't leave Malta when I thought him so ill. His companions took every shilling he had, and then he asked me for my wages, telling me he'd soon have plenty of money. And when my wages were gone, he made me sell my clothes, and Motcombe and Bradstock got the price of them from him, for he was afraid of them, and dared not refuse them anything. I was then left penniless, and with only the clothes I wore; and he used to curse and strike me, Sir, because I had *no more money to give him*, and his bad companions wanted to *insult me, and abused and even beat me*, because I wouldn't

listen to their infamous proposals. They used to go out at night and rob, and bring the stolen property to Figgins's lodgings.

"I had remained in the house you had, Sir, the owner having allowed me to stay there, and keep it clean until it was let. These bad men often wanted to come into it, but I would not let them, and never saw them except twice a day, when I used to go and see how Figgins was going on. One night an attempt was made to break into the house, but I heard the noise, and gave such an alarm, by screaming out of an upper window, that the robbers had to run away, and I could take my oath that they were Motcombe and Bradstock, for it was a moonlight night, and I saw them almost as plain as if it were day.

"They broke into another house that night, and brought the plunder to Figgins's lodgings; and, would you believe it, Sir, they wrote a letter to the police, saying where a part of the property could be found, for the handwriting was discovered to be Bradstock's, and they escaped from Malta, leaving Figgins to suffer for their crime. He was taken up and thrown into prison, and the Doctor, out of pity, made a subscription to take me back to England. I never thought, Sir, there could be such wickedness in the world. I have lost my character by my folly, and have become a miserable, broken-hearted creature, with no one to blame but myself."

I wrote a note to my lawyer by this unfortunate woman, authorizing him to give her pecuniary assistance, and place her in a lodging, to be ready in case her evidence should be required. I was afraid to give her money myself, lest it should be deemed that I was tampering with a witness; but though inclined to save this unhappy woman from further degradation and misery, I laid a stern prohibition on her ever going to see my daughter, in case she might discover her abode.

"I forgot to tell you, Sir," said the nurse, "that the last

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robbery committed by Motcombe and Bradstock was on an officer at Malta, who, being on the point of coming to England with all his effects packed up, had removed from the barracks to the inn nearest the point where persons embark, and was having a take-leave dinner with his brother officers, when these thieves entered his room by the window, and having stolen all he possessed, sailed for England by the very packet that he was to have come in. One of the robbers dropped a silk pocket-handkerchief in the room, by which, it being marked with his name, he was known to be the thief. The officer came over in the same packet with me, Sir, and I heard he was determined to offer a reward for their apprehension, and to prosecute the thieves."

"What is the officer's name?" inquired I.

"Major M'Culloch," replied the nurse.

It flashed across my mind that I had heard the name before, and, after a few minutes' reflection, I recollected that it was of this very individual my old acquaintance, Mrs. Scuddamore, had spoken when I met her at Portsmouth, on my arrival in England, to which place she had gone to meet her expected friend. Nothing, I felt, could be more favourable to my case than to have the real characters of Motcombe and Bradstock proved. The establishment of the fact of their robberies would inevitably cast a strong doubt on their evidence, and render their charges more than suspicious.

I saw Mr. Goldey the following day, and he, too, thought the arrival of Major M'Culloch a very fortunate circumstance. It occurred to me that it might be possible for me to leave the Major to prosecute these men for robbery, and proceed no further myself.

"The more I reflect on this business," observed he, "the more do I feel convinced that, for your own sake, you should *institute the strictest inquiry*, to bring every circumstance to *light concerned in this disagreeable and painful affair*: other-

wise, the charge made at the police-office by these scoundrels, and your being committed to prison on it, will give rise to a thousand rumours and suspicions, which can only be put an end to by a public investigation."

Again did my moral pusillanimity prompt me to avoid the measure advised by Mr. Goldey; but he got so angry when I uttered a few words indicative of this desire, that I no longer betrayed my feelings, but merely observed that I had imagined the indisputable proofs of the guilt of those who impeached my character, as also the ignoring of the bill against me, would prevent the necessity of a trial.

"So it might," replied my lawyer, "if the world were prone to judge all who are accused, fairly, instead of harshly. But as unhappily in society men are more ready to listen to attacks against their fellow-men, however unworthy of credence those may be who make them, than to doubt the alleged guilt, because the accusers are vile, it becomes the positive duty of those assailed to justify themselves from the least stain attempted to be cast on their characters."

There was a sternness in the nature of Mr. Goldey that precluded the entire and perfect confidence which a client should repose in his lawyer. I had originally fully determined to conceal nothing from him, except my knowledge of the death of my wife's sister, and the mad conduct on my part that followed it, and led to all my subsequent troubles. That part of my history I felt sure he would doubt, for he was such a matter-of-fact man, and possessed so much plain common sense and self-control, that he could not be made to comprehend that any person not positively mad could draw on himself the suspicion of a fearful crime, by concealing the body. I felt that his eyes would be ever on me, if I revealed all these circumstances, — that he would believe me to be a murderer — or a — maniac.

The astonishment he had betrayed, and the reproaches he had uttered, when I confessed my having given Figgins a cheque on my banker for the large sum he had extorted from me at Nice, had prevented my revealing other facts to him, with which I was aware he ought to be made acquainted. As, for instance, the embarrassment into which his boastings at Palermo had got me there, and my having allowed a man of whose infamy I could not entertain the slightest doubt, to become an inmate of my house at Malta. I felt my heart beat quicker with wounded pride and shame at the thought that these facts, so calculated to injure me in public opinion, would, nay must, come before the world in any investigation that might take place. I anticipated the anger and disgust Mr. Goldey must experience when he too late should discover my disingenuousness and folly in withholding from him what it was of such importance that he should know. Yet with this conviction, I could not bring myself to tell him the whole truth, and like an idiot — a madman — I preferred leaving him to learn the facts that would redound so much to my disadvantage, from evidence in a Court of Justice which he had no means to refute, or even to palliate the evil effect of. To a man of a less rugged and stern nature, more skilled to comprehend the weakness of his fellow beings, and to sympathize with them, I could have revealed the whole truth, and prepared him to make light before a Court of Justice of circumstances really important in the case. But to let him remain in total ignorance of them I knew was madness, and yet I allowed this to be, rather than meet his suspicious or contemptuous glance, such was the weakness, the pusillanimity of my nature. — Often did I put the question to myself, whether I, who was, Heaven knows, little disposed to incredulity, would believe the history of my own troubled life, if related to me by another? and I groaned in spirit as my reason *told me that I could not*, and that the utmost extent of my charity *could not go the length* of absolving the individual who revealed

it, from strong suspicion of crime, if not from absolute condemnation.

As the healthy and vigorous can seldom sympathize in the sufferings of the sick, nay, are disposed to disbelieve in their amount, so are those blessed with firm nerves and cold temperaments prone to judge harshly the moral maladies which they never experienced, and to attribute the results to guilt never for a single moment contemplated, however the appearance of it may exist. A lawyer should be like a judicious and skilful physician. He should encourage the confidence of his client, as the doctor does that of his patient, until every symptom of the case is revealed, that a palliative, if not a remedy, may be applied.

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## CHAPTER LXV.

THE following day Mr. Goldey learned, at the office where Motcombe and Bradstock had been examined and committed to prison, that a Major M'Culloch had been there to lodge information against them, for a robbery committed on him at Malta, and as my servant had them traced to their lodgings two days before their arrest, he was enabled to furnish the address, and a warrant of search was issued to a constable.

At the lodgings, nearly the whole of the Major's property was found, a small portion of it only having been disposed of. Other property had also been discovered, which proved that these men had been active in their depredations, and amongst the rest of the spoil, was a gold watch, chain, and seals, a showy shirt-pin, a snuff-box, and some clothes, which my servant recognized as having belonged to Figgins.

While all this additional evidence of the culpability of Motcombe and Bradstock was furnished, these knaves had not been idle in prison. An attorney of a low grade was induced, by the hope of reward which they held out, to enlist in their cause against me, and he drew up under their instructions a brief, every charge in which they swore that they could substantiate. I was accused of having murdered the sister of my wife, whose body I had concealed in a cavern, near to which the crime had been committed. I was further charged with having given large sums of money to a person of the name of Figgins, who had discovered my crime, and whom had I afterwards attempted to *murder, lest he should betray my secret.* The said Figgins, *they asserted, had been greatly distressed for money a short*

time, yet was, soon after, living extravagantly, and in the possession of a gold watch, a snuff-box, and other expensive trinkets, as well as of clothes fit for a gentleman. That they knew that I had tried to conceal my abode from the said Figgins, and had gone secretly from place to place for that purpose; but that he had, through the means of a female servant in my establishment, been always kept aware of where to find me. That they knew the said Figgins to have expended hundreds in a short time. That when he was without money at Naples, he had followed me to Palermo, and had, in a few days after, returned, well stocked with cash. That, having a strong suspicion that he was paid for keeping some important secret, probably a crime, of which he often gave hints when intoxicated, they had formed a plan to detect it, and for this purpose, one of them had gone to Palermo, where he learnt that a person answering in every respect to the description of Figgins had been there, and had been seen to meet Mr. Herbert in private. That Mr. Herbert had gone in person to his banker's, and had drawn for three hundred pounds, which, when the banker offered to send to his house by a clerk, Mr. Herbert declined, and took charge of himself, the whole amount being, by his desire, paid in gold. That the following evening Figgins, being intoxicated, had attempted to intrude himself into a reading-room, open only to subscribers, and on being excluded, boasted as a proof of his respectability, that he was the possessor, and could produce three hundred pounds, being precisely the amount which Mr. Herbert had drawn from his banker. That Figgins said he could have as much more whenever he liked, and that Mr. Herbert, a gentleman of great fortune and family, was his friend, would answer for him, and that he could make Mr. Herbert do whatever he pleased. That the boasting and insinuations of Figgins, coupled with his intoxication and low manners, had excited strong suspicions in the minds of the banker, and other gentlemen at Palermo, who were

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cognizant of these circumstances. That Figgins had some extraordinary power over Mr. Herbert. That he had avowed that he could make that gentleman tremble at his nod, as he held his fate in his hands. That some of the English merchants resident at Palermo, desirous to institute an inquiry into this mysterious transaction, had search made for Figgins, who they had found had sailed for Naples the following day, whither these gentlemen had immediately written to have inquiry made about him, in order that the connexion between him and Mr. Herbert should be sifted, and if his influence over the latter originated in crime, it should be, for the sake of justice, laid open.

The bankers at Nice and at Palermo were summoned to come to England to give evidence of the payment of the money made by them, or to furnish, through the English Consul at both places, attested proofs of these facts.

The merchants at Palermo, who had taken the strongest part against me, were written to, to send statements of the cause of their suspicions. My servant was served with notice to attend the trial, and the nurse, whose arrival in England was discovered, received a similar one.

Disappointed in their scheme of extorting money from me, and maddened by my having handed them over to the law, Motcombe and Bradstock, urged on by a spirit of vengeance, had stopped at no falsehood, no perjury, to injure me.

My lawyer was in high spirits at the proofs furnished by Major M'Culloch, of the robbery committed by these vile men at Malta. Keen in the pursuit of criminals as a sportsman after game, he exulted in the anticipated certainty of their punishment.

"The counsel I have employed," said he, "are of opinion, that the known infamy of your accusers, as well as their accusation having only been made after you had commenced a prosecution against them for a conspiracy to extort money from you, *and, above all, the bill of indictment against you being ignored,*

renders your going into a formal defence almost a work of super-erogation."

"And I also am of that opinion," observed I.

"What! you would allow your name to be handled about as one who had never cleared up his reputation against charges of crime of the most serious nature, or who had compromised with his accusers?" replied Mr. Goldey; "the charges and your committal to prison have been published in the newspapers, bruited about in society, and cannot now be silenced except by the decision of a Court of Justice. You know little of the world, Mr. Herbert, if you are not aware that a charge against any man, however respectable, although preferred by persons of known disreputability, will always find credence among a certain class of individuals, so much more prone are they to believe in guilt than in innocence. The class I refer to is, unhappily, a more numerous one than that disposed to be indulgent, and should a trial not clearly disprove the charges made by these scoundrels, your name would be henceforth a mark for vituperation, and must eventually lead to many actions on your part, for defamation. One of the peculiarities of our time, Mr. Herbert, is a dread of being duped, not only as regards our pecuniary affairs, but our opinions. Hence many men, not naturally malicious, are ready to pronounce every individual not belonging to the immediate circle of their friends guilty of any crime brought against them, lest they themselves should be laughed at for an excess of good nature, which they imagine to mean nothing less than weakness, and of which they would feel ashamed. It is with these persons, as with those who set up to be connoisseurs of old pictures. They are ever prone to pronounce the specimens exhibited to them not to be originals, because they know that there are more copies than originals in the market, and in fear that the accuracy of their judgment should be called in question. Every *man now-a-days* would prefer being considered a sharp fellow,



who cannot be imposed on, rather than pass for a generous-minded one who could."

Though aware of the truth of Mr. Goldey's opinion, I nevertheless now heartily regretted having employed him. I wished I had fallen in with a legal adviser less addicted to carrying measures to extremities, and could not help suspecting that a love of litigation, and the profits to be derived from it, had a much greater influence over him than a regard for my reputation. I felt an increasing repugnance towards him growing on me every day. At our interviews, and they were now frequent, I fancied that his searching and stern eye was often on me, and that its expression was full of suspicion. Had he divined that, after all, there was something held back from him, and that I had some strong, some hidden motive, for wishing to avoid a trial? In proportion as this fear grew on me, did my dislike to him increase; and yet, when I examined the purport of his actual words, I could find nothing to justify my suspicion, and with the pertinacity peculiar to nervous persons, who are ever prone to be self-tormentors, I referred to his looks for a motive for my inherent dread of him, when in his words I could not discover one. Alas! it was in the consciousness of my own disingenuousness towards him that this fear of him originated, although I was unwilling to admit it, even to myself.

I went every day to see my daughter, and marked with heartfelt satisfaction her progress in her studies and accomplishments. Yet even this solitary source of comfort was not without its alloy, for as I saw her expand into health and beauty, becoming every day more attractive, and noticed her easy and graceful demeanour, her gentle and polished manners, the facility with which she acquired all that was taught her, and her retentiveness of the knowledge and accomplishments once acquired, I experienced a deep pang, at reflecting that one so calculated to excite *attention and fascinate* regard, should bear a name at which the

finger of scorn might one day point, marring the brilliant prospects and position in society to which she might otherwise so naturally aspire. I would have her name as bright, as spotless as herself; I would not that even those unconnected with her who bore it, should ever draw a stain on it; how then did I shrink at the notion that I, her father, her only living relative, should, by my own madness, have drawn suspicion of crime on myself, and if guilt could not be proved, at least expose my name to the suspicions of the world, by certain inexplicable circumstances connected with my past life.

Partial insanity, the most charitable cause that could be alleged for my strange conduct, must prove highly injurious to her; for to wed a girl, however charming, who was suspected of having a taint of insanity in her blood, would be as insurmountable an objection to most men as to form an alliance with one whose father had incurred dishonour. In either way my daughter, the sole object of all my affection, of all my interest in life, must suffer by me, and I loathed myself as this mortifying reflection passed through my mind. Why had I not been a man bold in the consciousness of having really committed no crime, instead of a pusillanimous idiot? Had I been the first, I would have repelled with indignation and scorn the first menaces of Figgins, and by defying him have saved myself from the suspicious circumstances which my yielding to them had entailed on me.

Although it was now too late to dwell on these painful reminiscences, I could not banish them from my thoughts; and, heartily despising myself, I felt that my daughter must one day or other have cause to blush for, if not to hate, me.

Mad as had been my moral cowardice in submitting to the threats of Figgins, I now considered the late effort to resist the attempt at extortion made by his vile companions as no less a proof of insanity, knowing, as I ought to have done, that in *prosecuting them*, circumstances must be revealed which would

inevitably implicate me in suspicions, from which I could not extricate myself! How far wiser and better would it have been to have silenced them by the sacrifice of a few hundreds — ay, or even a few thousands — than to have stirred up this fire, which, though it must burn them, would sear me so deeply as to leave indelible marks through life!

There are persons — and I unhappily was one of those — who are born to be miserable! Let it not, however, be imagined from this assertion that I was a fatalist; no, my belief was founded on the influence exercised over individuals by their peculiar temperaments, depending much on the health of their parents, and the character of those with whom their childhood was passed.

The elasticity of my mind was greatly impaired by the being, for so long a time, a constant witness to the passionate grief of my poor mother, to control which no effort was ever made on her part; and subsequently by my being subjected to the baleful influence of my guardian, Mr. Trevyllan, whose gross selfishness and evil opinion of mankind had passed like a simoom over my youthful mind, destroying every bud of promise, every plant of goodness that might have grown to maturity in it. With this moral blight came also a physical one: morbidness of feeling was accompanied by weakness of nerves; and an unhealthy pride, that made me shrink from degradation, was, alas! unsupported by the self-respect that should have shielded it from subjecting itself to aught like insult.

All these peculiarities, so fertile in producing future misery, had never been corrected. They grew with my growth, and strengthened with my strength; and even now, when I could reflect and philosophize on them, I had not the power to vanquish or mitigate them.

*Aware that my name had been mixed up in the police reports with those of the vile wretches whom I had prosecuted for*

conspiracy, and whose charges against me had led to my imprisonment, I could not bring myself to resume my evening visits to Mrs. Neville, notwithstanding her repeated entreaties, lest I should encounter at her house some person not disposed to meet me under present circumstances. She, with the kindness which ever characterized her, endeavoured to induce me to come, until, finding me so averse to comply with her reiterated solicitations, she ceased to urge me; and then, with my wonted habit of turning every thing into some cause for self-torment, I was pained that she no longer pressed me to join her evening circle, and attributed her not doing so to a consciousness that my presence would not be acceptable to the individuals composing it.

This suspicion goaded — tortured me; and I conclude, produced, though I did not intend it, some striking change in my manner to this admirable woman. She, however, maintained the same kind and cordial behaviour to me, and evinced every day an increased interest in, and a more tender affection to, my daughter, who in return, doted on her and her playmate.

Often, ungrateful and selfish as I was, did I listen, with a moodiness of mind and a jealous heart, to the constant praises bestowed by my innocent child on her benefactress and companion.

“Yes,” thought I, “*they* are all and everything to her, while I am as nothing. Her happiness no longer depends on *me*; my presence has ceased to be necessary to her. Why did I permit this, the only tie that binds me to life, to be loosened? Why allow others to usurp that place in the heart of my child that should be occupied wholly by me?”

At such moments I was frequently tempted to reclaim the possession of my daughter, and to take her to some far distant region, leaving the suit to which Mr. Goldey attached such vital importance, to drop to the ground, and the world to form its

own uncharitable conclusions on my flight. But could I now tear my child from those to whom she was so fondly attached, without inflicting such chagrin on her affectionate heart as might injure her health, and impair the elasticity of her spirits? Would it not be cruel, nay barbarous, to deprive her of the only protectress on whom I could rely in case of my death — the only friend who constituted her happiness? Could I bear to behold her pining away in some distant land for those so dear to her, and for those comforts and elegances which habit had now rendered necessary to her? No; of this selfishness I was not yet hardened enough to be guilty, and I offered up this sacrifice of my own happiness to that of my beloved child.

Anxiously did I watch her manner to me, during every visit I paid her. Did I perceive the slightest shade of indifference on her part, the least demonstration of a desire to abridge the length of my stay, I grew jealous, and moody; and the indications of dissatisfaction, the motive for which the dear innocent girl could not divine, inspired her with a timidity, and fear of giving offence, that led every day to a decrease of confidence and cordiality between us. I mentally accused her of a want of gratitude for the sacrifice I made in permitting her to remain with her new friends, — a sacrifice which I thought should have called forth in her a livelier affection to me, — while she was wholly unconscious how much it cost me to make it, or, in fact, that it was a sacrifice at all. How frequently do we accuse those dear to us of not duly appreciating acts of kindness, of the extent of which they are ignorant, or of the self-denial required to carry them into effect of which they never even dream!

Sometimes Frances would look towards the time-piece on the chimney, with an anxious eye, after I had been for some minutes silently brooding over some fancied evidence on her *part of impatience* to leave me; and I would quit my chair, *deeply hurt*, and coldly bid her farewell, when she, *flinging her*

arms round my neck, would exclaim, "How sorry I am, dear papa, that Matilda and our governess are waiting for me to go to Madame Tussaud's wax-works, and it is now the time, for I should have liked to stay longer with you!"

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## CHAPTER LXVI.

THESE naïve explanations of the causes of her looking towards the time-piece sometimes disarmed my displeasure; but not always was I so reasonable, for there were days when my nerves, affected by a sleepless night or troubled dreams, and painful reflections, I was rendered irascible, and although my tongue did not utter reproaches, my heart formed them. "What," thought I, "can this creature, on whom I so fondly dote, and whom I see but for a short period once a day, grudge the brief time devoted to me, and long to get released from my presence, in order to seek some puerile gratification?"

I judged my dear and innocent child as if she were a woman to whom every feeling of my breast was laid open, who, aware of the sacrifices I was making for her, and of the jealous pang of a too fond heart, trifled with and neglected me — I forgot that over this burning lava of love was a deep and hardened incrustation of reserve that concealed the fire. That the coldness of my manner, superinduced by the habit of moodiness, must naturally operate to render a girl of Frances's age shy and embarrassed with me, and that not possessing the power of amusing or interesting her, I ought not to wonder that she preferred the society of those who did. "If she knew how I love her," would I sometimes say, "she would not prefer any one to me?" forgetting that it is the natural impulse of every human being to prefer those who most contribute to his or her happiness; and a cool and dispassionate examination of my own peculiar case, had I been capable of making it, would have convinced me that with all my boasted love, I did not personally contribute to that of my daughter.

“Would she be less happy were I a thousand miles off?” was a question I often asked myself; and the answer was, “No,” for there she would not have to support a daily visit, rendered uncongenial by the gloomy countenance, grave manner, and fits of abstraction and silence, of her unhappy father. There were times when these reflections tortured me; yet, strange to say, at other moments they occasioned a vague sense of relief, by the conviction that if any revelation or suspicion in the forthcoming trial should cast dishonour on my name, and consequently render a residence in my native land insupportable to me, it would be some consolation to know, that my absence, however prolonged, would not interfere with the happiness of my daughter, although my separation from her must bring protracted sorrow to me. “When I have offered up this last and greatest sacrifice,” thought I, “I shall have at least the consciousness of feeling that I allowed no selfish motive to interfere with what I believed to be best calculated to ensure her welfare, and a day may come when she will understand how well I loved her.”

On my way to Mrs. Neville's one day, I encountered Mrs. Scuddamore, escorted by an elderly man with a certain military air, which instantly led me to guess that the individual must be the Major M'Culloch of whom she had spoken. I would willingly have avoided this meeting, for I had an instinctive dread of the well-known frankness and *brusquerie* of the lady, which, always disagreeable to me, would be, under present circumstances, still more so. But I had approached too near her, before discovering our proximity, to permit my crossing the street, or turning back, without subjecting myself to the charge of rudeness. On drawing close, I recognised in her companion a face familiar to me at Malta, which convinced me that he was indeed no other than Major M'Culloch.

“Well met, my dear Mr. Herbert,” said Mrs. Scuddamore.  
“I have been several days endeavouring to find out your address.





Give me leave to introduce Major M'Culloch, Mr. Herbert. The Major has also been in search of you; but, as I told him, one of the innumerable disadvantages of not belonging to the military or naval profession, is the difficulty which occurs in finding out gentlemen in London who are not regular residents there, and whose names consequently are not inserted in the "Court Guide," whereas at the United Service Clubs soldiers and sailors are soon found. I pity all those who do not belong to the army or navy, but more especially the first service, to which, from being so long attached to one of the finest regiments in the army, I naturally give the preference.

While Mrs. Scuddamore was uttering this speech Major M'Culloch drew himself up as if on parade, protruding his chest, and holding up his head, while he looked somewhat sternly at me, only making a very formal bow when we were introduced.

"The Major wished particularly to have some conversation with you," returned Mrs. Scuddamore. "My lodgings are near at hand. I reside in Gilbert Street. We may adjourn there, if you have no objection; or, if you prefer it, we can call on you, if you give me your address?"

Unwilling to be exposed to the visits of this very unceremonious lady, I told her that I had a call to make in Brook Street, after which I would proceed to her abode; and I hurried off to Mrs. Neville's, where, after staying a much shorter time than usual with my daughter, I walked to Gilbert Street, where I found Mrs. Scuddamore, and her friend the Major, waiting my arrival.

"The subject on which I wished to speak to you, Sir," said the latter, "is connected with two men, against whom, if I may credit certain statements in the newspapers, you have commenced proceedings for a conspiracy to extort money from you. *It so happens that these men have robbed me at Malta, and I also have commenced a prosecution against them. A considerable*

portion of my property has been discovered at their late lodgings, but although I can certify it to be mine, it will not be delivered up to me until after the trial for robbery is over. It occurred to me, Sir, that you could identify these scoundrels as being the same individuals who attempted to break into your house a few nights before they plundered me. A man of the name of Figgins, a person against whom considerable suspicion has been excited, declared, when arrested for having some stolen property found in his lodgings, that these men had been the thieves, and to injure him, against whom they bore great malice, they had brought the plunder there in order to implicate him. Figgins told me that, when beneath your roof, these same persons had proposed to him to join them in robbing your house. Now, this proposal proves that they must have known him to be dishonest, or they would not have made it; and Figgins positively asserted that you, Sir, as well as he, saw them; and that you prevented him from shooting them."

While the old soldier spoke, he eyed me sternly; and I, considerably embarrassed by this new proof of the indiscretion of Figgins, felt the blood mount to my face.

"Figgins misinformed you, Sir," replied I. "I perfectly well remember that an attempt was made to break in through a window in my house at Malta, and that the robbers, alarmed by hearing that we were on the alert, hastily retreated, but I did *not* see them, and consequently could not identify them to be the persons now in prison."

"Did Figgins express his conviction that these men were the individuals who attempted the burglary?" inquired Major M'Culloch.

"If he did," answered I, "the assertion has escaped my recollection."

I saw the Major glance suspiciously at Mrs. Scuddamore, and *this increased my embarrassment.*

*Marmaduke Herbert. II.*

"Come, come, my dear M'Culloch," said she, "let us be open and candid. There is nothing like being so, you may be sure; my good friend Mr. Herbert knows me long and well enough not to take offence at plain speaking; therefore I will not mince matters. The Major, Mr. Herbert, thought it strange that a gentleman of good birth and fortune should have been some time at Malta without ever having been seen at the Governor's table, or elsewhere. This he considered rather suspicious." (I felt my blood boil at the word.)

"I explained to him your extraordinary shyness and reserve when at college, and your not being on habits of acquaintance with a single fellow-collegian, so that it could not be wondered at if the same shyness and reserve prevented your making yourself known to the Governor, and becoming acquainted with the officers of the Garrison, as all gentlemen stopping at Malta for some time do. Then the assertion of the man Figgins, who is suspected to be no better than he should be, that you saw the thieves breaking into your house, and prevented him from shooting them, struck him as being so extraordinary, that he formed a very erroneous opinion of you, which I have left nothing undone to remove."

"The opinion of Major M'Culloch, who is an utter stranger, cannot be of the slightest importance to me, Madam," said I, haughtily. "Nor do I acknowledge his right to question or comment on my actions."

"Now then, my dear Mr. Herbert, don't allow yourself to be hurried into anger, and to mistake that for offence, which is only the result of my friendly feelings towards you," observed Mrs. Scuddamore.

"Pardon me, Madam," answered I, "but I really cannot comprehend how your friendly feelings towards me can justify *this gentleman's* suspicions and comments;" and I looked sternly at the Major, who in return drew up his head with an air of of-

fended dignity, and opened his mouth to speak, when the lady laying her hand on his arm, requested him to permit her to speak first.

"When my friend here arrived from Malta," resumed she, "I spoke to him of you, Mr. Herbert, and with those expressions of esteem and regard, which ever since our first acquaintance I have entertained. The high terms I lavished on you drew his attention."

"It is strange," observed the Major, "that a gentleman of the name of Herbert has lately been at Malta, and that a servant who had been in his service, a man said to bear a very bad character, had accused him of having attempted his life; a statement that would have led to a judicial inquiry, had not the surgeon who had been called in by Mr. Herbert declared that the wound on the servant's head had to his certain knowledge been inflicted by Figgins's falling, when in a state of extreme intoxication, and knocked his head against the sharp edge of a table. This surgeon declared that *he* was immediately summoned to Figgins, whom he saw a few minutes after the accident, and that Mr. Herbert had evinced great humanity on the occasion; and previously to his departure from Malta, which took place the following day, had left ample means in his hands to provide for the comfort of, and medical attendance on, Figgins. That he had endeavoured to remove the false impression which had taken hold of Figgins, relative to his master's having struck him, but that such was the state of that man's mind, induced by constant habits of intoxication, that he could not be reasoned with. Then followed Figgins's declaration that his master had recognized the robbers who attempted to break into his house at Malta, and had prevented him from firing on them; as also, that although he had recognized them, he had not informed the police of this point.

"All these extraordinary statements produced an unpleasant impression at Malta, and gave rise to various reports to your dis-

advantage, which I, having learned from my friend here, endeavoured to refute; and being perfectly convinced that could we but find you, you would at once explain any circumstance that now appears strange and mysterious, I have been looking out for you everywhere. So long the wife of a brave and distinguished officer, and, as you have not now I believe to learn, having derived from him those nice and decided sentiments on the point of honour which should be the guide of all, I could not allow your name to be mixed up with aught derogatory to it, without frankly acquainting you of the circumstance, and enabling you to put a stop at once, and for ever, to such base falsehoods.

"The opinion of my friend here may not, as you have said, be of any importance to you, Mr. Herbert, but it has great weight with me, for as he will soon become my husband (indeed we only wait until he is gazetted, as I could not think of wedding any officer of a lower rank in the army than the late ever lamented Colonel Scuddamore), I wish that a gentleman for whom I really feel a sincere regard, should stand as high in the esteem of my future husband, as he does in mine."

"And I, Sir," added the Major, "am well disposed to judge favourably of any gentleman whom Mrs. Scuddamore honours with her friendship; for I know her chivalrous sentiments on the point of honour, and that no partiality could induce her to overlook the slightest deviation from it."

"The simple circumstance of my having commenced proceedings against the men who robbed you, Sir," observed I, "a step which must elicit every circumstance connected with them and Figgins, ought, I should have supposed, to have convinced you, as well as this lady, that I could have nothing to dread from any of the individuals, and should have saved me from being catechised — a process always painful and insulting to the feelings of *a gentleman*: ladies are, of course, privileged; and Mrs. Scuddamore is peculiarly so in my eyes, from a lively recollection of


former kindness, when, a raw and inexperienced youth, I stood in need of her good advice and assistance. But permit me to add, that if your confidence in her high sense of honour and judgment is not sufficient to induce you to abstain from forming injurious suspicions of a man she has favoured with her esteem, I must prefer not at present entering into disagreeable details, and wait for my justification in your good opinion until the trial of those whom I have indicted for a conspiracy against me shall have effected this point."

And, bowing respectfully to Mrs. Scuddamore, and coldly to Major M'Culloch, I left the room, notwithstanding that the lady made a move to prevent my withdrawing. I believe this step on my part was injudicious, but my pride was wounded, and I obeyed its dictates without reflecting on future consequences.

In due time, letters were received from Malta, Naples, and Nice, sending the affidavits of the surgeon, and the testimonials of the few friends I had known in those places, in favour of my character and conduct while in habits of intimacy with them.

Figgins was transferred from the prison at Malta to one in London; and a few days after his arrival, he wrote me a letter, which he induced the turnkey of his prison, by the promise of a large reward from me, to have put in the post-office. The turnkey delivered the letter to the gaoler, and he, deeming it expedient, as a chance of leading to the truth, opened it, in the presence of witnesses, and then, carefully taking a copy, resealed and forwarded the epistle to me. Its contents were as follows: —

"SIR, — As I now believe you had no intention of making away with me at Malta, and find that those rascals, Motcombe and Bradstock, have played me false all along, I wish to make amends for whatever harm I may have done you, and also to get these scoundrels punished for perjury and conspiracy. If you will *pledge yourself* to give me five hundred pounds more, I will



swear, before any court of law they bring me to, that the whole story they have said I let out, is a lie. I will swear you were never in my power in any way; that I never suspected you of murdering your sister-in-law; that I never discovered her body where you concealed it; in short, that the whole story is a hum got up by these rascals, to get money from you. You may depend on me *this* time; for I really wish to serve you, and to punish those who tried to ruin me, by bringing their stolen goods to my lodging when I was too ill to see what they were about, and then writing to the police to tell 'em where to find the plunder. One line from your hand to say yes, is all I require.

“J. FIGGINS.”

I trembled with the mingled emotions of indignation, shame, and fear, as I perused this letter; but the first feeling prevailing over the others, and thoughtless of results, I seized my pen and wrote to Figgins that I was surprised at his daring to address me, and to state that if he wrote any more letters, I would not receive them. This answer, as was afterwards proved, had been opened by the gaoler, and tended greatly to remove the suspicions entertained against me, occasioned by the numerous falsehoods circulated by those ever on the alert to prejudice and condemn all who are accused.

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## CHAPTER LXVII.

It had been deemed expedient by my legal adviser that proceedings should also be commenced against Figgins for a conspiracy, the first menaces to extort money from me having originated in him. This step was, I felt, fraught with danger to me. What might not be drawn out to my disadvantage from an examination of this man? For although he could bring no evidence that could really criminate me before a jury, enough might transpire to throw a deep and indelible shade of suspicion on my character. I dared not oppose the advice of my counsel and lawyer, for I felt that such a measure would greatly prejudice me in their opinion, so I remained a silent observer of a line of conduct on their part, the result of which I could not help foreseeing must, with my sensitive feelings, prove fatal to my happiness.

Figgins, angered to the utmost degree by my stern refusal to accede to his scheme, had now become as vindictive, if not more so, than Motcombe and Bradstock. He vowed that he would be revenged, and bring to light the crime which, as he alleged, his conscience had often reproached him for having so long concealed.

An early day was named for the trial, and never did a criminal, conscious of guilt, experience a greater degree of trepidation and terror than did I, who had no actual crime of which to accuse myself. Distracted and restless, I was more than half tempted to fly from England for ever, and forfeit at once my reputation and honour; but then would come the reflection, that such a *step would put the seal on any suspicions that might be awakened*.



on the trial, and therefore I chose the lesser evil, and remained.

I had frequently recourse to opiates to deaden the agony of my mind during this time, but, alas! they failed to relieve me; for, during the stupor they induced, I was haunted by incoherent, but fearful, dreams, as torturing as my waking thoughts; and I really believe that, had this state of mind continued some time longer, insanity or death must have soon ensued. I had not the consolation experienced by those who start from a fearful dream, to bless God that it was *only* a dream, and then again sink into slumber.

Oh! no. When I awoke, and recalled my scattered senses to consciousness, I shuddered at the thought, that the reality of my position was as agonizing as the troublous visions whence I had started! Then I would remember every incident of my life, and as I traced effect to cause, I would imagine that I saw the hand of Omnipotence in all, even to my having brought down on myself the terrible ordeal which I alone could have invoked.

Never shall I forget my feelings when Mr. Goldey told me it was positively necessary that I should attend the trial, and appear in the witness-box the following day. My utter ignorance of all judicial proceedings had left me unprepared for this necessity, and not the utmost exertion of my self-control could prevent my exposing the dismay and horror with which the contemplation of such a measure inspired me. I staggered to a chair, and gasping for breath, inquired if there were no means of escaping this great annoyance?

"None whatever," replied Mr. Goldey. "But you are pale as death, Mr. Herbert," observed he. "One might suppose that it was *you* who were to be tried, and not those scoundrels whom you are prosecuting! Your nerves are, indeed, in a very *fearful state*, and when this trial is over, I should strongly advise *you to consult a skillful physician*, in order that some treatment

should be had recourse to, to remove their irritability. I have, it is true, in the course of my practice seen instances of prosecutors and witnesses more nervous than the guilty. We all know how the poet Cowper suffered when called as a witness; but you, my dear Sir, are really so excited, that I can no longer wonder that these rascals, having, by some means, discovered your extraordinary nervous susceptibility, have availed themselves of the knowledge to endeavour to extort money from you."

At another time, and under different circumstances I should have felt wounded and offended at the freedom of my lawyer's remarks; but now, having the sense to perceive that the unusual extent of this nervousness furnished the sole explanation or excuse that could be offered for my having yielded to the menaces of Figgins, far from resenting the comments of Mr. Goldey on the subject, I confessed that my nerves were so shattered ever since the deaths of those dear to me, that I had no control over them, and was alarmed even about the most puerile things.

"All this comes from an idle life, Mr. Herbert," said my lawyer. "A man without a profession or occupation, which keeps his mind from self, is ever prone to become nervous, or in other words, a hypochondriac, indulging the strangest fancies, and unfit for the world and the complicated trials it imposes. Business takes a man from morbid thoughts; it makes him think less of self, and more of others, and this of itself is a great blessing; for, depend on it, Mr. Herbert, that if we expend on self only, the interest and thoughts that should extend to our fellow-beings, we destroy our own happiness, for *self* is the worst object on which a man can allow his mind to be wholly engrossed."

The eventful morning of the trial arrived. Oh! how I trembled at its advent. Mr. Goldey came for me, and noticing my pallor and trepidation, advised me to take a glass of wine and a *biscuit*. I had not thought of this expedient to support my

drooping spirits; but I acquiesced to his proposal, and having swallowed the wine, I entered a carriage with him, and was driven to the court, where the counsel retained for me were already in attendance. I seemed in a dream, a vague sense of terror filled my breast; and yet, the wine I had drank, by stimulating my nerves, and quickening the circulation of my blood, lent me a sort of desperate courage, that enabled me to conceal my alarm. "Those scoundrels," I overheard Mr. Sergeant Vernon say to Mr. Goldey, *sotto voce*, "have got Messrs. Burton and Vyner on their side. I wish they had any other counsel, for as our client is so nervous a man, and these gentlemen are apt to use, if not abuse, the latitude allowed to our profession, they may inflict pain on him. The lawyer is a sad scamp, so great a disgrace to his profession, that I heartily wish he was struck off the roll. He may truly be called the rogue's friend, for all his clients are among that class, which can find no other."

"Very true," replied Mr. Goldey; "but that fact is so well known to the Bar, that his clients suffer by it."

How quickly beat my heart as I heard this conversation, and how did I summon up my courage to appear calm and collected! And now the case was called, Herbert, *versus* Motcombe and Bradstock, by the crier, and I was placed in the witness-box. The court was densely crowded, and every eye was fixed on me. It seemed to my excited mind, as if from every one of those multitudinous eyes, there issued a beam, aimed expressly at me, which entered my brow, and seared my brain; yet, I allowed not my eye-lids to droop to shield me from these burning beams shot at me; but wound up to a desperate pitch of courage, preserved a calm demeanour. Motcombe, Bradstock, and Figgins, were in the dock, and my heart quailed within me, as I met their demoniacal glances, so expressive of intense hatred and vengeance. The case was opened by my counsel, and while he stated every particular of it, my eye wandered through the

court. Seated by the judge on the bench, I recognized, with a painful emotion, the noble lord whom I had formerly met at Naples, and who, because he had not previously known me, had so charitably concluded I was not worthy of so great an honour. His glance was at once stern and triumphant. It seemed to say, that the man who was not of *his* acquaintance, might be capable of any evil. Major M'Culloch was not far distant, and alternately looked from me to the dock, with a severe countenance. As Mr. Sergeant Vernon proceeded in a luminous and eloquent speech to state the case, a solemn silence was maintained in the court. A considerable impression seemed to have been produced by his discourse. Many a face was turned to mine, with a mingled expression of curiosity and interest; and as my eyes glanced over them, my courage seemed to revive at these symptoms of sympathy.

"My client," said Mr. Vernon, "must not be judged severely, if, when reduced to a state of illness and nervousness, occasioned by severe domestic afflictions, and far from his native land, with no friend near to counsel or support him, he was wanting in the energy, which, under other circumstances, would have enabled him to repel the attempts to extort money from him, with the same firmness with which he has withstood it in England. Those acquainted with mankind, and who know how powerfully affliction operates on the nervous system, will comprehend the temporary weakness that led him to fall a prey to the machinations of a designing villain, and will not allow themselves to imagine the least possibility of crime to have ever existed, where only the results of depression of spirits, and broken health, can be found."

The letter from Motcombe and Bradstock, naming the sum, and the conditions for which they would bind themselves to molest me no more, was here produced. I was sworn, and proved *I had received it*, and believed it to come from them, as also the

particulars of the interview with them, and their menaces. I was then subjected to the cross-examination of the counsel for the defendants, and he put many subtle questions to me, all calculated to excite the prejudices and suspicions of the jury against me.

"Why," inquired Mr. Burton, "did you not at once, and indignantly, refuse compliance with the demands of another person, who had previously compelled you to pay him large sums? Remember, Sir, you are on your oath."

"My client," observed Mr. Vernon, "is not bound to answer that question at present. My brother Burton forgets that the evidence against his clients, having proved the conspiracy, he has nothing to do with any other case."

"My clients have already declared," resumed Mr. Burton, "and are now willing to be sworn, that Figgins had informed them that Mr. Herbert had, at different times, given him large sums of money, to induce the said Figgins to conceal his knowledge of a murder committed by Mr. Herbert, of which payments, evidence can be furnished."

A murmur ran through the court, and again every eye was turned on me, while I, ready to drop to the ground, and wishing, in the sharp agony that wrung my heart, that it might open to hide me, was obliged to support my trembling frame against the bars of the box.

And now Mr. Burton stated the case for the defendants; and most artfully was it constructed, omitting nothing that could serve his clients or inculcate me. The statement was listened to with breathless attention; and, as it proceeded, I could perceive that it produced a strong impression against me. When concluded, Figgins was the only evidence called to substantiate the charge. *His appearance was even worse than I had anticipated — his face bearing all the disgusting marks of intemperance; his*

countenance expressive of hardened impudence; and his dress, the remains of his former vulgar finery, completed as revolting a picture of a man of habitual low habits and vices, as could be seen.

Being sworn, Mr. Burton demanded — “Did you inform Messrs. Motcombe and Bradstock that Mr. Herbert had given you large sums of money to conceal his having committed murder?”

“Never!” was the concise reply.

“Remember, you are on your oath!”

“So I do.”

“By the virtue of your oath, you never made any such disclosure to them?”

“Not I. — I wouldn’t be such a fool as to tell a secret for nothing to them, when I could get as much money as I pleased from Mr. Herbert for keeping it.”

A suppressed murmur in the court was again audible.

“Recollect yourself!” said Mr. Burton. “How should my clients know your secret, if you had not revealed it to them? I don’t think it likely that Mr. Herbert” (and here the speaker looked cunningly at me) “would have told it to them.”

“No, I don’t think he would,” replied Figgins, his swollen lips distended into a grin, “for Mr. Herbert wasn’t given to talking about it!” and he looked impudently at me while he spoke.

“Then you persist in swearing that you never told your friends how you obtained so much money?”

“Never!”

“Your memory, I am afraid, is not very good. Recollect, you often drank with my clients: and the old saying has it, ‘*that when the wine is in the wit is out.*’ — You may, when you had

drank more than usual, have placed this confidence in your companions?"

"Not I — I knew them too well for that; — I wasn't going to give a cow, which gave me such good milk, to them who would soon leave not a drop for me."

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## CHAPTER LXVIII.

No cross-examination could extort from Figgins an admission that he had ever told Motcombe or Bradstock what they had sworn he had revealed to them, although every reply he made to the queries of their counsel implicated me as deeply as he could.

The evidence called for the defendants being now closed, and their statements wholly disproved, the judge summed up; and the jury brought in a verdict against them for conspiracy to extort money, and for gross perjury: and the judge, having pronounced sentence of three years' imprisonment and hard labour, they were removed from the dock; while I received the congratulations of my counsel and of Mr. Goldey.

And now the case against Figgins was called; and my counsel stated it at length, calling evidence to prove Figgins having pursued me from place to place, to extort money. The counsel for the defendant then cross-examined the witnesses; and the result was, that my servant, who was one of them, admitted facts but too well calculated to excite the strongest suspicions and prejudices against me.

"In what capacity did Figgins first enter the service of Mr. Herbert?" demanded Mr. Burton.

"He was engaged to sit up at night with my master, when he was ill with a brain fever," was the reply.

"How long did he remain?"

"I believe about ten days, or thereabouts."

"When he was discharged, did he remain at Nice?"

"No; he left Nice, and was absent some weeks."

"Did you know where he went?"



"I heard from the nurse-maid that he went to Wales."

"When did he return?"

"The evening before my master left Nice."

"What was the impression made on your mind relative to Figgins, while he attended on your master?"

"I formed a bad opinion of him, from observing that he was addicted to drinking, and was of a prying, inquisitive turn."

"Why, did you think him prying, and inquisitive?"

"Because, I often overheard him asking the nurse-maid questions about my master and his family."

"What were those questions?"

"He inquired whether any young lady had been missed, or had ever fallen down, or been thrown down a precipice in my master's neighbourhood? and whether any one had been accused or suspected of the murder?"

"What did you think, when you overheard these questions?"

"I thought he was half crazy, or tipsy."

"When did you see him again?"

"The evening before we left Nice."

"Where did you see him?"

"He brought a letter to my master's lodgings."

"Who for?"

"For my master."

"Was an answer sent to that letter?"

"I heard there was; but I did not deliver it."

"Where did your master next proceed?"

"To Turin."

"Did he lead the persons at Nice to believe that he was going to remain at Turin?"

"I understood he was going back to England."

"Where did he go to from Turin?"

"To Naples."

"Did he make some stay there?"

"Yes; some weeks."

"Where did he then proceed?"

"To Palermo."

"Did Figgins come to Palermo?"

"He came to Palermo some short time after. I saw him one evening in the street, and he appeared to be the worse for liquor."

"Did you speak to him?"

"No; I avoided him, for I had a bad opinion of him."

"Did it not strike you as strange that Figgins came to Palermo?"

"I did think it odd; but as he had no settled place of abode, I thought he might be going from one place to another, to look for a situation."

"How long did your master remain at Palermo, after you saw Figgins there?"

"Not long."

"Where did your master proceed to, when he left Palermo?"

"To Naples."

"Where did he then go?"

"He took an excursion of some days into the country, to see some antiquities."

"You did not hear where?"

"No."

"When your master returned from this solitary excursion, where did he go next?"

"We all went to Capua, as we believed, on our road to Rome."

"Did your master say he was going to Rome?"

"I don't recollect whether he told me so; but I know I understood it to be so."

"How long did you remain at Capua?"

*Marmaduke Herbert. II.*

"Only a few hours."

"And where did you then go?"

"We returned to Naples."

"What — on the same day?"

"Yes; the evening of the same day."

"Did you go back to the same hotel?"

"No."

"Where did you go?"

"To another hotel at Naples, whence we proceeded to Sorrento."

"Did your master take all his luggage with him to Capua, — and did the owners and persons at the hotel think he was going on to Rome?"

"Yes; they all thought so."

"Did you not think it very odd that your master should try to mislead people into a belief that he was going to Rome, and then only go as far as Capua?"

"I did think it strange."

"How long were you at Sorrento before Figgins came there?"

"Not long."

"Did you see him?"

"Yes; I saw him there."

"Did anything particular strike you, connected with his presence at Sorrento?"

"Yes, I remember that during the time he was there, a person came one day to the house, to say that my master was taken very unwell at a certain spot near the town, where he was often in the habit of going, and wanted me. I went, and found my master looking very ill, and seemingly agitated. He leant on my arm, and walked slowly home, being very weak, and as we passed through Sorrento to the house, I saw Figgins walking with

Motcombe and Bradstock, and I was surprised that he did not take off his hat, or even touch it, to my master."

A murmur through the Court was now heard, and I *felt* that all eyes were on me.

"What happened next?"

"The following day my master went to Naples, and from thence I got orders to bring Miss Herbert, her nurse, and all the effects of my master to Naples, where we were to arrive late on the following evening, and to drive *direct* to the Mola, where my master was to meet us. We were not to go near the hotel."

"What next occurred?"

"We did as we were ordered, met my master on the Mola, and by his directions, we embarked in the packet, which in half-an-hour after set sail for Malta."

"Did you suspect that there was any mystery, or attempt at concealing his changes of residence on the part of your master?"

"I did think there was a desire that our embarking for Malta should not be known."

"Were you long at Malta before Figgins made his appearance there?"

"No; only a short time."

"Did you not think it very strange that Figgins should follow your master to every place?"

"I did think it odd."

"Did Figgins come to Malta alone?"

"I don't know, but I saw him walking with Motcombe and Bradstock at Malta."

"Did he come to your master's house?"

"Yes, and my master engaged him as a servant."

"In what capacity?"

"My master never told me. He only said that Figgins should *not have any power over me.*"

"Did your master want an additional servant when he engaged Figgins?"

"I did not think he did."

"Figgins then was an extra servant?"

"Yes."

"Did your master know that Figgins was a man of intemperate habits?"

"I believe he did."

"Had you ever suspected that your master disliked Figgins?"

"Yes; I had seen when he was dismissed at Nice, that my master disliked him."

"Yet after this, and knowing him to be a drunkard, he took him into the house, although he did not require an additional servant?"

"Yes."

"Did you not think this a very strange proceeding?"

"I did consider it rather extraordinary."

"Having, as you have acknowledged, a strong personal dislike to Figgins, did you make any observation to your master when he re-engaged him, or did you wish to leave his service?"

"I certainly did make some representations on the subject, and I did wish to leave."

"What was the conduct of Figgins while in your master's service at Malta?"

"It was very irregular."

"Did he indulge in habits of intoxication?"

"Yes; he was generally in liquor, and smoked — a thing never before permitted in the house."

"When remonstrated with on this latter point, did he leave it off?"

"No, he became very abusive."

"What were his occupations?"

"He really did nothing."

"Did he appear to entertain the respect and submission generally shown by servants to their employers?"

"No; he did not."

"Did you not suspect that there must be something very wrong, when an extra servant is hired, and not only does no work, but drinks, and smokes, against the regulations of the house?"

"I confess I thought there was something very incomprehensible in it; but my master had been always so worthy a gentleman, such an excellent husband and father, and so kind to his servants, that I could not bring myself to think that he could be to blame, and therefore I imagined that his sorrow for the loss of my poor mistress had so disturbed his mind, that he was no longer the same as formerly, and did not keep the same regularity and strictness as before."

"Do you remember an alarm having been given that some robbers were endeavouring to break into the house at Malta, one night?"

"I do."

"Who first gave the alarm on that occasion?"

"My master."

"Did Figgins wish to have the robbers fired on?"

"Yes."

"Who prevented this being done?"

"My master."

"Did Figgins seem to know who the robbers were?"

"He did, and from what he let out at the time, I guessed he meant Motcombe and Bradstock."

"Did your master take any step to discover the robbers?"

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"Yes, he did; for he sent me to the police-office to report it."

"What occurred after?"

"Figgins got very much intoxicated the following days, and smoked; the smell of the tobacco infected the house, and when I remonstrated with him, he became violent and insolent, and even intruded himself into my master's presence in a very disrespectful manner; and in attempting to strike me, he lost his balance, fell down, and hit his head violently against the leg of the table."

"What did your master do on that occasion?"

"He showed the utmost humanity. Staunched the wound, which bled profusely, and sent off immediately for a surgeon."

"Did not Figgins accuse your master of inflicting the wound, and with the intention of killing him?"

"Yes; he did."

"Can you swear that your master did not strike him, or push him down?"

"Yes; I can positively swear he did neither."

"What do you suppose was the motive that led your master to leave Malta so soon after the accident that occurred to Figgins?"

"I really don't know, but I concluded he wished to return to England."

"Did it not occur to you, that he wished to leave Malta while Figgins was unable to follow him?"

"I believe some such thought did come into my head."

"Did you think that your master was afraid of Figgins?"

"I thought he was very shy of him."

*Here closed the cross-examination of my servant, and the case of Figgins was stated by his counsel. It openly accused me*

of murder. Stated that his suspicions being excited by hearing me continually raving in my sleep of having thrown a lady over a precipice, and having buried the body in a cavern, he had determined on finding the body, and bringing me to justice. That he had gone to Llandover, in Wales, had made inquiries, had found that a young lady, my sister-in-law, had been supposed to have fallen over a cliff, and he had dug in several parts of a cavern in the neighbourhood, had discovered the body of a female, which he had removed to another place, in order that should I wish to have this proof of my crime put aside, I should not know where to find it.

A murmur prevailed in the court, and all eyes were turned again on me. The statement detailed the sums of money Figgins had received from me by menacing to reveal my guilt. The evidence that could be furnished by the banker at Nice, who had paid the amount of my cheque for 500*l.* to Figgins, as also the evidence of the 200*l.* in money paid by me into his hands at Palermo, corresponding precisely with that sum drawn by me from my banker at Palermo. The statement of these facts produced a great sensation in Court, and I felt like a convict awaiting sentence of death. Oh! the agony of that hour! Never, never can it be effaced from my memory.

The statement went on to tell how Figgins having renewed acquaintance with Motcombe and Bradstock, and having lavished large sums in feasting them, they formed suspicions that he had some means of obtaining money, which they were bent on discovering. How they made him tipsy repeatedly, to discover his secret. How he, fearful of betraying it, fled from them; how they pursued him from place to place, until he, alarmed for his personal safety, and also, that when intoxicated he might betray the truth, had sought a private interview with me at Malta, and *had insisted on my taking him beneath my roof for protection*

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against the machinations of these men, in whose power he was to a certain degree, by their knowledge of some former offence which he had committed. How these men followed him to my house. How he had refused to see them, and how they had uttered menaces against him. How they had proposed to him to let them enter my house at night to rob me. In short, not a single detail, connected with the whole affair, was omitted; and although my counsel tried by a rigorous cross-examination to impair the testimony of Figgins, they could not succeed.

During the statement of the circumstances, which I had so foolishly, so madly, concealed from my legal advisers, I felt the blood recede from my heart to my brain, so violently, that I expected nothing less than that a stroke of apoplexy would fell me to the ground, and put an end to my shame and torture. I saw, although I dared hardly meet their eyes, the looks of astonishment and anger that were exchanged between my counsel and Mr. Goldey. I saw that their confidence in my innocence was destroyed, that I was in their opinion, a lost — a degraded wretch. — The judge summed up the evidence, and the jury having withdrawn for a considerable time, returned and pronounced a verdict against Figgins for a conspiracy to extort money from me; but expressed their unanimous opinion, that so serious a charge as murder having been sworn against me, and the evidence of Figgins not having been refuted, they thought that I should be committed to prison, until, on a formal trial, I could be able to disprove the charge made against me. This opinion seemed to be that of the whole Court also, for a murmur of approbation was audible, until the Court was called to order by the judge. Sentence of imprisonment for two years was pronounced on Figgins, who was removed from the dock, while I was given in charge to be conveyed to a prison once more, there to await the result of a *trial, the crime of which I was accused not being a bailable one.* Mr. Goldey approached me, his eyes flashing with anger.

"Why in the name of common sense," exclaimed he, "did you conceal the facts that came out on the trial of Figgins from me and from your counsel? You have destroyed your character for ever, for even an acquittal after the trial, now become inevitable, could not remove the obloquy which the uncontroverted evidence of to-day has cast on your reputation."

"I wish to speak to my counsel to-morrow," replied I, "and although I cannot, Mr. Goldey, exculpate myself from the madness of not revealing all you this day heard, be assured that I am not only innocent, but that no proof of crime can be brought forward against me."

He shook his head incredulously, seemed doubtful whether he would continue to act for me; but yielded, when I requested him not now to desert me, and to let me see my counsel early the following day.

My feelings on again entering the prison may be more easily imagined than described. I was a crushed — a ruined man! The burning brand of shame seemed to sear my brow, and my heart was pierced with anguish. For how many days, weeks — nay months, might I not pine in this hateful prison, before a trial liberated me from it? And during this period to bear the stigma of guilt, to be prejudged by hundreds — thousands; oh! it was agony! And my child, my pure, my beautiful child! how bitter was the pang with which every recollection of her was fraught! How long might it not be before I should again behold her? and when that blessing might be accorded me, how could I bear to meet the glance of her, on whose name I had drawn down disgrace and dishonour. How could I meet Mrs. Neville, knowing that although a trial might acquit me of murder, it could not destroy the damnable evidence of Figgins, which proved me to have bought his silence with hundreds of pounds, and to have received a ruffian of the lowest, basest habits,

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beneath the same roof with my daughter. — Nothing but conscious guilt, or insanity, could be received as an explanation of these proofs of criminality, and I writhed in an agony of mind, compared with which, all physical torture is light, as my reason pointed out the extent of my disgrace and its consequences.

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## CHAPTER LXIX.

THAT was indeed a fearful, a terrible night! I trembled for my reason, and prayed that, if I must lose it, it might not be destroyed until I had seen my counsel, and enabled him to comprehend the peculiarity of my unhappy character, which had led step by step to my present misery and disgrace.

Mr. Sergeant Vernon came to me early the following day, accompanied by Mr. Goldey. I had been so struck by the intellectual physiognomy of this gentleman, as well as by the benevolent expression of his countenance, that I felt I could reveal to him that which I could not bring myself previously to disclose to Mr. Goldey. Not wishing, however, to offend the latter, I did not object to his being present while I unbosomed myself to Mr. Sergeant Vernon; nay, I proclaimed my own blameable disingenuousness with Mr. Goldey, entreated his pardon for it, and then confessed that, finding he did not or could not comprehend my wayward temper, habitual reserve, and nervousness, which had occasioned all the wretchedness in which I now found myself plunged, I had not moral courage enough to confide to him the circumstances brought forward the previous day by Figgins on the trial, lest he should believe me culpable.

"Why, this is downright madness," exclaimed Mr. Goldey.

"There is more madness in all men," observed Mr. Vernon, mildly, "than people imagine. Who can say that, on some subjects, *all* men may not be more or less mad. Do not let us interrupt Mr. Herbert, whose peculiar nature and character I *must* examine, as an anatomist does the subject which he dis-

sects, in order to discover the malady that destroyed life. Keep nothing from me, Mr. Herbert. Remember that you are confiding your errors to a man who has so long and so profoundly studied mankind, that he has learned to pity and sympathize with their misfortunes, while tracing effect back to cause."

Encouraged by his mildness, I opened my whole soul to Mr. Vernon, and left not a single secret in it unrevealed save the one which every trial, every misery, had been based — namely, my having involuntarily occasioned the death of my wife's sister, and having concealed the body.

He listened with breathless interest to the narration; comprehended how the weakness and nervousness, induced by intense grief and long illness, had led to my falling an easy prey to the machinations of Figgins; how, having once yielded to his menaces, a dread of exposure of that fact precluded my seeking redress for a conspiracy, although perfectly conscious of my own freedom from guilt.

How great was the contrast offered between Mr. Vernon and Mr. Goldey on this occasion! The first understood every minutiae, every shade of my sensitive and nervous nature; the second could only view me as a maniac. I told Mr. Vernon of my anxiety to have the trial brought forward as soon as possible; furnished instructions to have the good clergyman and doctor of Llandovery brought as witnesses; as also my housekeeper, and the nurse of my wife's sister.

Fortunately for me, the Courts of Law were still sitting, and in a fortnight the trial came on. Often during that period did Mr. Vernon visit me, and, by his sympathy and kindness, alleviate the gloom of my prison. He possessed great influence over Mr. Goldey, and used it to remove from his mind the evil *impression* produced by the evidence of Figgins.

"*I see nothing to be made of his confession;*" said Mr.

Goldie, "except to account for his yielding to the scoundrel Figgins's extortion through insanity."

"Leave all the defence to me," would Mr. Sergeant Vernon reply; "and you will find what can be made by the exposure of a morbid pride and an over-excited sensibility, when worked upon by a not unskilful hand."

Figgins was sent down to Llandovery, in the custody of four policemen, who were to be present while the cavern and adjoining ground were to be opened in search of the body he had asserted that he had removed.

After a laborious and strict search, not a trace of any such evidence could be found; and when upbraided by his guard for the useless expense and trouble he had caused, he acknowledged that he *never had* found a body, and only pretended to have made such a discovery in order to alarm me, and that he might obtain the money he intended to extort from me.

This confession, made before the four policemen, had a great effect on public opinion. The day of trial came, and I appeared as a prisoner in the dock.

The counsel for the prosecution stated the case, but could bring no evidence to support the charge, except Figgins, who acknowledged before the Court, that he never had found the body, and only suspected the murder from hearing my ravings when in a brain-fever.

How differently sounded in my ears the murmur that was heard through the Court on this admission, to those which had so terribly wounded them on the former trial! Now, pity and sympathy were expressed in that murmur, and every eye turned towards me, beaming with compassion. The witnesses from Llandovery proved the mysterious death of my wife's sister, as also that I had never seen her. The death of my mother, my grief, and the severe illness, which was the result, were stated. My housekeeper proved, that from the hour I arrived at Llandovery, I

had not left the house, except to attend the funeral, and that when that sad ceremony was over, I returned home direct, and shut myself up in my room, absorbed in grief. She swore (good, worthy creature! how little did she think she was swearing that which was untrue), that I could not leave my chamber without her being aware of it. That I was ill in bed when Mrs. Maitland's servant knocked at the door to state that one of his young mistresses was missing. That she entered my room to inform me of the circumstance, and that I, although very ill, had left my bed, to join the servant in search of the young lady, and had passed the night in exploring every spot which it was deemed likely she might have visited. She bore evidence to the dangerous brain-fever that resulted from the fatigue, cold, and anxiety of that night. She related how, in the fever I kept raving that the young lady had fallen, or had been thrown down from a precipice, the general belief in the neighbourhood being that she had slipped from a narrow path-way, her favourite walk, over the cliff. She stated how Mrs. Maitland, the mother of the lost young lady, had nursed me through this brain-fever, and had become fondly attached to me from the interest I had taken in her misfortune. The whole circumstances of my recovery, my attachment to Mrs. Maitland's second daughter, my marriage, the discovery of the body of the long-missing young lady on the very day of my nuptials were narrated. My going off with the nurse, who was to identify the body, my humanity and tenderness on the occasion. — The interment of the body in my own family vault, my care and affection to my mother-in-law, and passionate love to my wife. — The deep gratitude of my mother-in-law to me up to the last moment of her life, were recapitulated, and excited a great interest in the Court.

The old nurse was then called. She proved the identifying of the body (forgetting, poor old creature, in the weakness of memory, brought on by age, that she had fainted when brought to the coffin, to look on the dead), and even spoke of the beauty still to

be traced in the face,— that terrible face, which I could not think of without shuddering !.

The clergyman spoke of my high reputation in my neighbourhood, — of my charity, and unimpeachable moral character: as also of his having attended the funeral of Miss Maitland.

The doctor gave his testimony in my favour, and so satisfactory was all the evidence, that nothing now remained, but to destroy the effect produced by the only facts proved by Figgins, namely, my having given him large sums to conceal the charge he made against me — of having murdered my wife's sister. — Why, if innocent, as was now proved, by so many witnesses of good character, had I yielded to his menaces? This query was addressed to the Court, by the counsel of Figgins. Mr. Sergeant Vernon replied to it in a speech, in which he so luminously and eloquently detailed the effect of violent grief and sickness on the nervous system; giving many illustrations to exemplify his statements, that not a single person in the Court refused credence to his admirable hypothesis. He called medical men, of high professional reputation, to prove, how often men of nervous temperaments, but of strict honour and probity, who were utterly incapable of a crime, had yielded, under the excitement of a dread of censure, to the menaces of a villain, and given vast sums to prevent an unfounded accusation being made against them.

He traced my history from boyhood. My extreme sensitiveness, amounting, in many instances, to a positive morbidness. The horror of exposing my name, and of drawing a painful notoriety on that of an only and adored child, blinding me, at the moment, to the danger and evil consequences likely to result from my reprehensible weakness, in buying the silence of a man from whose worst malice I ought to have well known, I had, in reality, nothing to dread. Never was the idiosyncrasy of a nervous *hypocondriac*, so well laid open and defined as by Mr. Sergeant



Vernon; and the countenances of his hearers revealed the compassion he had created in their breasts for me.

How powerfully did he describe the various emotions and conflicts of my agonized mind, during so long a period: and with what tact did he bring forward the testimonies in my favour, not only from my neighbours in Wales, but from the two intellectual and well-known Savans, with whom I had been on the most friendly terms in Italy, all vouching for the irreproachability of my moral conduct while known to them, and to their perfect confidence in my worth.

My heart was melted to a woman's softness, as I listened to these details; but, though filled with gratitude to heaven, and to the good man who defended me, my pride — my indomitable pride, and sensitiveness — made me writhe in torture at being thus held up to the public, as a poor, weak, and idiotic hypochondriac. I could not bear the pity I marked in the eyes of the crowded audience, whose murmurs of compassion reached my ear. Their pity brought no balm to the long-festered wounds inflicted on my feelings; and, in the morbidness of my excited nerves, I questioned myself whether an acquittal, achieved by revealing my moral infirmities, was not as difficult to be borne, if not as degrading, as a condemnation.

The jury brought in a verdict of not guilty; and the judge, in a discourse remarkable for good feeling and knowledge of the human heart, pronounced my acquittal, regretting the annoyance to which I had been exposed, through the machinations and perjury of a vile fellow who, basing his scheme of extortion on the incoherent ravings of delirium, which he had listened to when I was in a brain-fever; and, judging of mankind by his knowledge of one bad specimen of it — self, had, for so long a period, *rendered me his prey*, until, finding that I would no longer continue *to be so*, he had tried to avenge his disappointed cupidity, by

boldly charging me with a terrible crime, of which he had wholly failed in establishing a single proof.

Many individuals of the highest respectability had come forward after the trial to congratulate me, and express their satisfaction at its result; but such was the shock inflicted on my nervous system, that even their sympathy gave me pain. I felt persuaded that I must henceforth be regarded as little less than insane, and that to be pointed at by the finger of pity was almost as humiliating as if that of scorn were directed to me. I determined to leave my native land for some distant one, where, unknown, I could wear away the remainder of my life, leaving my child with the admirable protectress I had found for her.

I regulated all my affairs, amply rewarded Mr. Vernon, whose luminous exposition of my unhappy state of nerves had exonerated me from the fearful dilemma in which my folly — my madness — had placed me, and then prepared to depart.

"Never again," said Mr. Goldey, "will I believe a man culpable, however appearances may be against him, until a trial has decided his case. I acknowledge, Mr. Herbert, that had you revealed the whole case to me, I could not have believed that a man, conscious of his own innocence, could become the prey of a scoundrel like Figgins. Mr. Sergeant Vernon has proved to me how much the actions of a man may be influenced by the state of his nerves, a fact I never before even imagined, and henceforth I will not forget the lesson."

I dared not trust myself to take leave of my daughter, lest I should find myself unable to part from her; and my reason told me that I best consulted her happiness in letting her remain with Mrs. Neville. Our farewell would, I felt, be a trial I had not courage to support, and the sight of my agony might leave an impression on her ductile mind injurious to her future peace.

I wrote a long letter to Mrs. Neville explanatory of my feelings; entreated that a portrait of my daughter should be sent me every

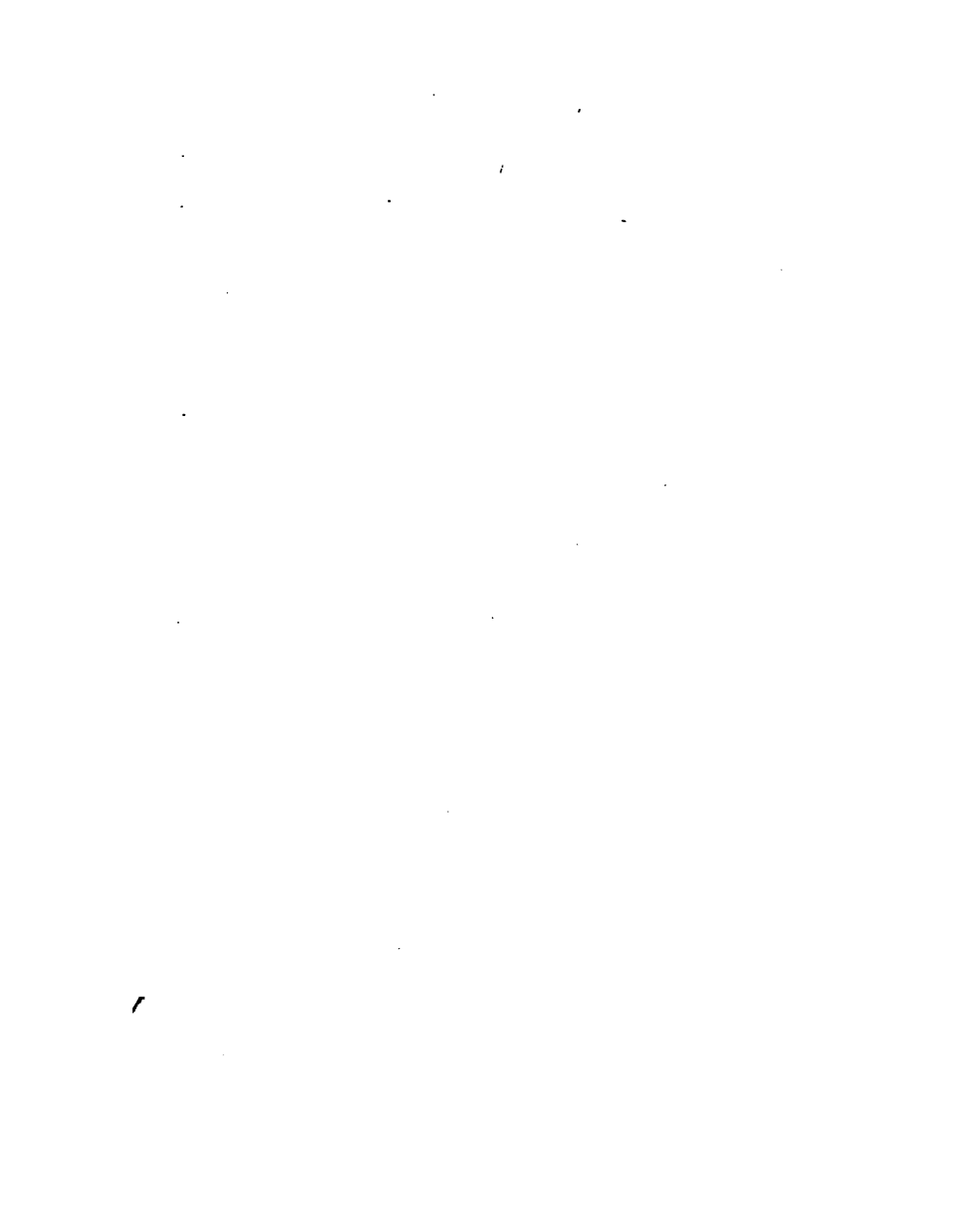
*Marmaduke Herbert. II.*

year, that I might mark the changes from childhood to womanhood, which I was not to have the bliss of witnessing; and having sent that excellent woman and her daughter costly gifts, as poor proofs of my gratitude, I left England, and, directing my course to Sorento, engaged the house in which I had resided when previously there. I preferred it, because in it I could picture my child in the rooms she had inhabited, and I could gaze on the little bed she had slept in. I found the good Padre Maroni at Sorento, as usual, constantly employed in works of piety and charity, in which I have endeavoured to aid him, and am often gratified by the visits of my worthy friend the Chevalier Bertucci; and, passing most of my evenings in the society of the good Padre, years have rolled on, Time bringing healing on his wings, as he draws me further from the days of my heavy trials, and nearer to that which will reunite me to my beloved and never-forgotten Louisa.

At the close of each day I murmur to myself, "A day nearer;" and this thought is as sweet to me as the sight of the bed where he is to repose, is to the weary traveller at the end of a long and most fatiguing journey. The narrating the events of my troubled life has filled up many an hour of my self-imposed solitude, and I have been soothed by the thought that when I am no longer a denizen of earth, my daughter will know why I left my native land, and made the sacrifice of consigning the charge of her youth to one with whom I believed her happiness would be more secure than with her Father.

THE END.

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